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The people's family prayer book

Joseph Parker

The People's Family Prayer Book.

BY

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FAMILY REGISTER.

GENEALOGY.

BORN.

MARRIED.

FAMILY AUTOGRAPHS.

AUTOGRAPHS OF FRIENDS.

[illegible]

FAMILY NOTES.

*" When soon or late we reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driven,
May we rejoice, no wanderer lost,
A FAMILY IN HEAVEN."*

PREFACE.

THIS is a FAMILY PRAYER BOOK.

Family prayer is not exhausted by one act of united worship. Sometimes family prayer can be offered silently: or the father and mother may offer it by themselves: or the children can offer it for fathers and mothers when fathers and mothers are not present. Every home should have a church at its very centre,—that centre may be the family table, the nursery, or the sick chamber; let that be settled by each household, but do not unchurch the sacred life of a true home. In some way and at some time God should be daily thought of by every family. “Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.” Many and beautiful are the family references in Scripture. “Hearken unto Me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep My ways.” “My son, if thine heart be wise, My heart shall rejoice, even Mine.” “The promise is unto you, and to your children.” “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: for

they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.” Blessed, therefore, is the family whose expectation is daily turned towards the Seat of Mercy and the Throne of Glory.

The Individual, the Family, the Nation,—these would seem to be the units through which the whole drama of human history is unfolded. To only one of them does this book attempt to address itself, yet that one is invested with supreme importance by the fact that it stands between the other two and unites them. When the family unit is right, the other units will respond to its chastening and ennobling influence. I cannot but feel, therefore, that the culture and direction of family worship should receive the most earnest and careful attention. Let me implore parents to take away from every religious exercise the very appearance of its being a task, or even a mere duty, and to connect every such exercise with a feeling of joy, as if it were to be looked forward to with eager expectation. Family worship should be short, simple, tender in feeling, and direct in petition. This has been the aim I have kept in view; and the degree in which the aim has been realised will be the degree in which this book can claim special and, I trust, useful characteristics.

Personally I have never enjoyed family prayer so much as when immediately at the close of the morning

meal the Mother of the house has taken the book of prayer and sweetly read a suitable portion. There has been no kneeling; no formality; no bodily exercise; the eating of bread and the giving of thanks have not been separated even by the re-arrangement of seats. Each family will, of course, settle its own method, but as this plan has strongly commended itself to my judgment, I venture to suggest its adoption.

Most of the Prayers are intended for Morning use, though several of them are equally suitable for Evening worship.

May the God of the families of the earth accept this attempt to serve Him, and send upon all our households daily tokens of His fatherly presence and direction. Thus shall the common fire be as a sacrificial flame, and our common bread be as a sacramental sign.

J. P.


THE CITY TEMPLE,
October 1st, 1889.

COMPANION TO THE PEOPLE'S PRAYER BOOK.

See the end of this Volume for Notices of THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE, which contains many other Prayers, and a very large number of Short Discourses suitable for reading at Family Worship.

THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE is the life-work of the Author of THE PEOPLE'S PRAYER BOOK.

*"This is the confidence that we have
in Him."*

“HATSOEVER ye shall ask in prayer,
BELIEVING,

ye shall receive: and whatsoever ye shall ask

IN MY NAME,

*that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in
the Son. If two of you shall agree on earth as
touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done
for them of My Father which is in heaven."*

“YE HAVE NOT BECAUSE YE ASK NOT.”

SECTION I.

FAMILY PRAYERS.

“AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.”

WE MUST FORGIVE BEFORE WE CAN PRAY.

WHEN FAMILIES PRAY, CHURCHES PROSPER.

“THAT THEY MAY CALL UPON THE LORD, AND SERVE HIM
WITH ONE CONSENT.”—*Zephaniah* iii. 9.

*“Guard us waking, guard us sleeping,
And, when we die,
May we in Thy mighty keeping
All peaceful lie:
When the last dread call shall wake us,
Do not Thou, our God, forsake us,
But to reign in glory take us
With Thee on high.”*

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[For Prayers on Special Occasions, and for Short Sunday Home Services, see the other Sections. See also a Collection of Sentences, which may be introduced into the general family prayer as occasion may require. The conductor of family worship should carefully examine the Sentences, to see which of them will best suit the circumstances of the household, and select the place in the prayer where they can be most appropriately introduced. By adopting this course every prayer can be made suitable for family use, even such of the prayers as may be more distinguished by the spirit of communion than by the spirit of supplication.]

The CONTENTS of this Volume will be found fully set forth in the INDEX at the end.

FAMILY PRAYERS.

I.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM cxliii.]

ALMIGHTY FATHER, teach us by Thy Spirit how to pray. If Thou wilt inspire the prayer, Thou wilt also give the answer. We will praise the Lord for His goodness, and then call upon Him to supply our great necessity. Thou hast been good to us day by day. The cup of each day Thou hast filled with the wine of Thy love. When we thought Thee far off, Thou wast even at our right hand; and when we said Thou hadst forsaken us, behold, our hearts were made to feel all Thy pity. Now, for Thy dear Son's sake, guide and help us all the day. At night be our defence; in the morning be our hope; and at all times be our refuge and strength. Come to us by the way of Thine own choosing: whether by trouble or joy, whether through darkness or light, whether on the mountain or in the valley, do Thou come and help us. Day by day we would see the Saviour more clearly, and obey Him with fuller love and constancy. God be gracious unto us, and abundantly answer our desires. May fathers and mothers be wise and tender; may children be loving and good; may servants serve as in the sight of God; may strong men be gentle, and may weak lives seek the strength Divine. Let the great house and the little house alike be the object of Thy care; and may they whose hearts are discouraged remember God and cast away their fear. Lord, hear us. Lord, glorify Thy Son. Eternal Spirit, be our abiding Guest and Comforter. *Amen.*

II.]

[*Scripture Reading* : COLOSSIANS iii. 17-24.]

MOST MERCIFUL FATHER, be pleased to write Thy law upon our hearts, that we may love it, and keep it with all diligence. Thy commandment is exceeding broad, yet by the grace that is in Christ Jesus we can fulfil it all. For that grace we now pray as we gather around the sacred Cross. This day we would obey Thee. We would have no will of our own. Father, what wilt Thou have me do? is the cry of every heart. Give us this day high thoughts of God and Christ and truth, and drive from us everything that is evil. We would think of the fair land towards which Thou art leading us, where many friends are waiting for us, where the flowers never die, where the service never wearies. This life is full of toil and care and disappointment, but in Thy heaven we shall find rest and joy. We know that our blessed Saviour is preparing a place for us, that where He is there we may be also. In the joy of this assurance we go forward in duty, in suffering, and in all the work of life. We now put our hands in Thine, and rest our souls in God's eternal peace. Give us an answer to every temptation, and find for us a refuge when the storm suddenly darkens the sky. Gentle Jesus, may we walk with Thee all day; then shall the wilderness be as a garden, and the parched land as a pool of water, and the coming eventide will bring us a tender benediction. Hear us when we say, Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is done in heaven.

May grace, mercy, and peace, gifts of the Cross, make us rich and strong evermore. *Amen.*

III.]

[Scripture Reading : JOHN vi. 32-48.]

MOST MERCIFUL FATHER, our life is one long want, and Thou only canst give us what we need. We come to Thee in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to praise Thee in a new song for what Thou hast already done. We see Thee in every blessing which enlarges and comforts our life. We owe our lives to Thee. The bread and the water are Thine. All the fruits of the earth tell us how good Thou art. All friendship, all family love, all true union of hearts, we trace to the abounding goodness of God. What shall we say of Thy love to us in Christ Jesus? Our hearts are melted by this great love. May we know the power of that love in our daily life. Specially may we know the joy of forgiven sin and the peace of true holiness. Where there is bitterness or unkindness in our hearts, take it all away by the power of Thy Holy Spirit. Show us how few our days are, and how we should spend them, not in hatred, but in love. May the strong hold their strength for the weak, and may the rich be the friends and guardians of the honest poor. Help us this day to be wise and true and Christ-like. May children at home be happy, and may children at school be diligent. May masters remember that they have a Master in heaven, and may servants be faithful and cheerful in daily service. Saviour of the world, abide with us, break our bread, comfort our hearts, heal our sick ones, and fill our souls with holy praise. We are praying at the Saviour's Cross, for there alone can we obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

*"Father of heaven! Whose love profound
A ransom for our souls hath found,
Before Thy throne we sinners bend:
To us Thy pardoning love extend."*

*"Jehovah! Father, Spirit, Son!
Mysterious Godhead! Three in One!
Before Thy throne we sinners bend:
Grace, pardon, life to us extend."*

Amen.

IV.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN x. 30-42.]

*" Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the Cross I spend;
Life, and health, and peace possessing
From the sinner's dying Friend.*

*" Here I'll sit for ever viewing
Mercy's streams, in streams of blood;
Precious drops my soul bedewing,
Plead and claim my peace with God."*

WE bless Thee, heavenly Father, for the Cross of Christ. A cross we have seen, but not the Cross of Thy Son our Priest, our one and only Saviour. This is the revelation of God, this is the gift of heaven, this is the expression of eternity. It had not entered into the heart of man to conceive the Cross of Christ: who could have seen glory in this shame, manhood in this weakness, coronation and eternal sovereignty in this debasement? Surely this is the wisdom of God, this is the very grace of the heart of our Father, this is the mystery of the eternal knowledge. We doubt, we wonder, we adore; we cannot tell what the end will be, except as it is revealed to us in Thy most holy word; and there the revelation stands for light, peace, contentment, undisputed and everlasting sovereignty. Jesus shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet; the crown shall be upon His head alone; Thou hast given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. May we yield our obedience to Him now; daily may we present the sacrifice of love; every moment may we breathe for Christ; may every uplifting of the hand be an effort on behalf of the Saviour; may every expectation have about it the solemnity of prayer, and every retrospect be chastened and ennobled by a spirit of thankfulness.

Unto Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be praise evermore.
Amen.

V.]

[Scripture Reading : JOHN xxi. 1-14.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, open our eyes, and we shall see ; open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of Thy law ; open our understanding that we may understand the Scriptures ; give unto us the inward light, the spiritual inspiration, the celestial comfort without which our life is a daily pain, hastening to an infinite disappointment. We bless Thee for all religious uplifting of soul, for the noble emotions of piety, for the redundance of blessing which fills and overflows the soul. Thou art able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think : we are afraid to ask ; we are limited in thought ; we are startled by our own requests, and the very words of our prayer put us to shame : Lord, teach us how to pray—how to pray for the great things, the vast, the immeasurable, that our astonishment may be at Thy goodness and riches, rather than at our own boldness. Thou hast fed us, therefore have we lived ; Thou hast pitied us, therefore have we not been consumed. We are debtors to God's compassion ; we cannot pay what we owe ; we will fall down before Thee, and bless Thee, for blessing upon blessing innumerable. Take us into Thy holy keeping. May we be hidden with Christ in God, then shall our lives be broad as Thine own, lasting as God's duration, and every day shall bring a new morning, larger light, truer, deeper peace, and this existence, through the blood of the everlasting covenant and the whole mystery of the Cross of Christ, shall broaden and brighten into heaven's immortality.

To the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, Three in One, and One in Three, be the praise of all hearts, world without end. *Amen.*

VI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: JOHN xxi. 15-25.]

SPIRIT OF ALL GOOD, it is our joy to believe that all things are ours if we are Christ's, for Christ is God's. May Christ dwell in us, the hope of glory, the assurance of immortality, a fountain of present blessing and a pledge of all needful aid. Without Christ we can do nothing; He is the Vine, we are the branches; He is the Shepherd, we are the flock; we live in Him, and without Him we cannot live. Reveal Thy Son to us by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we humbly pray Thee. We bless Thee for what we know of Him. He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor; He had nothing, yet He had all things; He had not where to lay His head, yet He was the Master of the universe, the Lord of creation. We recognise in Him the Alpha and the Omega; the Ancient of days, and the Child born into the world for its redemption; a Root out of a dry ground, and yet the Plant of Renown. May we see Him in all the aspects of His character, until our growing wonder becomes lowliest worship, and our amazed imagination falls down prostrate before the Son of God.

We rejoice in the nearness of the living God; may we accept His nearness as at once a comfort and a judgment. May we know that the fire which does not consume may become an unquenchable fire. May we never know Thine anger, O Thou whose frown is the death of the universe; may we know Thy love, and see it, and feel it more and more; and then when the spirit becomes tired of this body and must quit this crumbling tenement, may it fly away to the higher realisations, the wider, grander liberties.
Amen.

VII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xxxii.]

MOST MERCIFUL FATHER, hear our praise, offered at the Saviour's Cross, for all Thy tender mercy. We would sing of the goodness of the Lord day by day, for He hath dealt bountifully with us, and hath been round about our life as a daily defence. Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would we give it. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit : a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. We bless Thee for Thy goodness. We remember Thy lovingkindnesses, and are glad. We see Thy mighty hand in our daily life, and therefore have no fear. Thou hast never forgotten us. In Thy pity Thou hast spared our weakness, and in Thy saving mercy Thou hast pardoned our sin. We know Thee through Thy Son, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. He called Thee Father. He taught us to call Thee our Father. Thou dost spare us, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Hear, then, our grateful praise, and listen to our household song.

Remembering with what price we have been redeemed, we would meet all the duties of life with Christian courage. All things are in Thy hands, and Thy kingdom ruleth over all. Thou makest darkness, and it is night. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. How can we adore Thy Majesty? How can we celebrate Thy love? We live, and move, and have our being in God. We have nothing that we have not received. Thou hast redeemed the souls of Thy servants; wilt Thou not also deliver our feet from falling, that we may walk before God in the light of the living? Hear, we beseech Thee, our household prayer, and make our home Thy dwelling-place. *Amen.*

VIII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM C.

WE thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that we can truly say, The Lord is good ; His mercy is everlasting. We have seen Thy goodness all our lives long, and we have tasted that the Lord is gracious. We now praise Thee in the name of our Saviour for home and bread, for friendship and love, for pardon and hope of heaven. Still our cry is, God be merciful unto us, and bless us. We have done the things we ought not to have done, but where sin abounds grace doth much more abound. We look to the Cross for the cleansing of our souls. We cry to the Saviour in our time of need. He is able to save unto the uttermost, and to perfect us in all goodness. God be merciful unto us, and bless us. We need help this day. Come to us and tell us what Thou wouldst have us do. Hear our prayer for wisdom and our cry for understanding, and look kindly upon us when we stretch forth our hands unto Thee. We would live honest, peaceful, useful lives, doing our duty without fear, and walking in Thy way with reverence and gladness. God be merciful unto us, and bless us. When the hill is high and the way is rough, may Christ be near at hand. When the wind is cold and the whole sky is one great cloud, may our hearts be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Try us, if Thou wilt, with fire, but help us and strengthen us lest we die.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, the fellowship and comfort of the Holy Ghost abide in our hearts until the day break and the shadows flee away, and we stand within the city that is on high. *Amen.*

IX.]

[Scripture Reading : JOB v. 17-27.]

HELP us, O God of grace, to trust Thee at all times, and not least when Thy hand is heavy upon us. Thou dost not willingly grieve nor afflict the children of men. All Thy way is merciful because all Thy purpose is love. In the morning Thou dost send a cloud, and in the evening Thou dost show the brightness of Thy face, and thus dost Thou turn our expectations upside down, and set at nought all our wisdom. We bless Thee that now we can say, Not our will, but Thine, be done. When Thou sendest us abundance may we be glad, and when Thou takest away the delight of our eyes may we say, It is the Lord. This miracle Thou canst work through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to call Thee our Father in heaven. In His name we direct our prayer, and from the foot of His Cross we look up to Thy throne.

BLESSED SAVIOUR, be our light this day and our defence in all places. Spirit of the living God, keep the door of our mouth that we may speak wisely with our lips, and when we know not what to say give us the speech of true wisdom. In the dullest places may we see somewhat of Thy beauty, and in the brightest scenes may we not be unmindful of the instructive shadow. Feed us with the bread of life. As we nourish the body, may we not neglect the soul. Day by day we seek Thee, that day by day we may be made strong in faith and goodness. God be merciful unto us, sinners ; wash us in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world.

*" Christ, beneath Thy Cross of shame,
All our sinful life we blame :
Penitent, we breathe Thy name :
We beseech Thee, hear us.*

*" Love that caused us first to be,
Love that bled upon the tree,
Love that draws us lovingly :
We beseech Thee, hear us."*

Amen.

X.]

[*Scripture Reading*: HEBREWS xi. 1-16.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, help us by Thy Holy Spirit. Thou must give us the eyes to see ; it is not in us to open our own eyes, for we were born blind. There is but One who can open our eyes, and His name is Jesus. He still makes clay and touches the blind eyes, and sends men away to the pool to wash. May we hear His voice and answer it with the diligence of love, and return from Siloam seeing the creation and the Creator in it. We bless Thee for all religious desires ; they lift us up above the cloud-line ; they draw us into the warm, large summer places of Thy creation. Help us to do life's work with both hands, with all industry and holy zeal, knowing nothing but Thy will, and serving Thee with unbroken devotedness. Thou knowest how sore our hearts are ; how broken and crooked our life is at its best ; how utterly empty and helpless we are in ourselves—yea, like branches cut off from the vine. So we come to cry unto Thee, and Thou dost call our cry a prayer. Our daily necessity utters its word in Thy hearing, and Thou dost call this crying prayer. Thou dost give great names to our little efforts, and shower great blessings where our poverty abounded. Do as Thou pleasest, Thou Majesty Divine. Draw us onward by Thy great word ; and, leaving ourselves behind and climbing up into a nobler self, may we know what it is to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let Thy word dwell in us—a well of water, a fountain in a desert, a secret blessing, a way into heaven, widest open when times are darkest.

Hear us, Lord, for Thy dear Son's sake, for Him Thou hearest always. *Amen.*

XI.]

[Scripture Reading : MATTHEW V. 33-42.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we bless Thee for all Thy patient care, Thy long-suffering, Thy tender mercy. Thou hast taken care of us as if we were of consequence to Thee ; Thou hast numbered the hairs of our heads as if Thou hadst not to count the innumerable planets and set the stars in their places. Thou hast hidden us in the hollow of Thine hand, and drawn us very near to Thine heart, and many a message of tenderest love hast Thou addressed to us in our low estate. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. Thou hast given us Thine only-begotten Son, Son of Mary, Son of man, Son of God, Lamb of God, Saviour of the world, whose name gathers unto itself all music, and comes down upon our sin and woe like the very gospel of Thine heart.

We commend one another to Thy tender care. Help us to pray for one another with a full and anxious heart. Thou knowest what we need,—we are always needing, our want is daily, our life is a long cry of necessity, or a long moan of pain. So would we always have the Lord's fulness near, and the Lord's blessing at hand. We would not be for one moment without Thee, for in that moment would our ruin be wrought. Where there is desire to know Thee better, let the light increase in lustre and in breadth ; where there is bitterness of soul on account of sin, let the infinite sweetness of Thy forgiving grace be tasted ; where there is a vow to live a nobler life, enable him who took the oath to fulfil it to the letter ; where there is a heart struggling against difficulty, temptation, distress of mind, body, or estate, let the angel of the Lord help the struggling one, and bring him into more than victory. *Amen.*

XII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : I CORINTHIANS XV. 29-40.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, when we think of Thee we are filled with solemn wonder. Thou art so great, so holy, so terrible in judgment, yet so tender in mercy. When we do not think of Thee all space is dark, all life is sad, all friendship is but the grave of love. We will think of the Lord and be glad ; we will look towards His dwelling-place, and be renewed in hope. Our house is so small compared with Thy great heaven, yet Thou Thyself dost make small things, and care for them and love them. Our household fire is but a spark, yet even the smoking flax Thou wilt not quench. We die whilst we live, yet Thine eternity is ours through the Cross of Thy Son. Thy greatness is not for Thyself, it is for us ; for our education, our comfort, our sanctification. Thou dost not affright us by Thy majesty ; Thou dost draw us by Thy love. If Thou hast hidden Thyself it is that we may seek Thee. We are invited to enter the cloud and speak with Thee face to face. This we can do only in the spirit. We are prisoners of the body and of time, yet there is an open way into heaven known to the spirit of man. If spiritual enemies discover us on that road, Lord, smite them. If angels draw near to welcome us may we know them to be our friends. Place our feet in the path of life, and in our weariness give us rest. Send ministering servants to sing to our hearts, and on the cold wind do Thou scatter the odour of heaven's flowers that we may know we are nearing home. Sweet Saviour, be ever near us, be ever in us. Thy Cross is our eternal hope, Thy Throne our everlasting refuge. God's name be glorified, God's will be done. Lord, Thou doest all things well. Have us in Thy holy keeping. *Amen.*

XIII.]

[Scripture Reading: MATTHEW X. 27-33.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou art careful for us with great care: there is nothing too small for Thine eye, there is nothing too mean for Thy pity and Thy patience. All our steps are counted in heaven. We would know the meaning of all this care: in Thy patience we would see Thy true majesty, in Thy saving grace we would behold Thy true riches: because Thou art mindful of the least, we know Thou wilt be mindful of the greatest: because Thou dost behold and care for the fowls of the air and the grass of the field, Thou wilt much more behold and care for those who are made in Thine own image. Teach us that we are temples of the living God, and that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in us; show us that Thou hast put a crown upon our head that fadeth not away; that Thou art prepared to redeem us—body, soul, and spirit,—and to save our entire manhood from the decay and the shame of death. Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Thou who hast redeemed our bodies from destruction wilt also redeem our souls from death. Wash our souls with the precious blood of Christ, that we may be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Oh that our faith in these holy verities might be deepened, purified, enlarged, carried on from weakness to strength, and from strength to triumph, that so the world might ever be beneath our feet, and heaven might throw upon us, whilst we are yet in the wilderness, all the mighty power and sweet compulsion of its infinite fascinations.

This is our prayer, this our cry to heaven—send down upon us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Son of God and God the Son, an answer of heavenly and abiding peace. *Amen.*

XIV.]

[*Scripture Reading*: MATTHEW vii. 1-12.]

O THOU Saviour of the World, our Lord Christ Jesu, Son of man, Son of God, all things are under Thy hand, or in Thy hand; Thou canst do as Thou pleasest with all things. Thou didst die for us; Thou didst rise again; to-day Thou art completing Thy resurrection by Thine intercession, and now our prayers are part of Thine; Thou dost take them up and refine them and give them meaning and wisdom, and return them to us in great answers of love. We cannot find our prayer in the answer; it is lost in the greatness of the reply. Poor prayer! great answer! Thou art able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. This is the eternal miracle of Thy priesthood. Where sin abounds grace doth much more abound. Thou art always first; Thou art always last. We cannot overtake Thee; we cannot get behind Thee. Thou dost lay Thine hand upon us from before, from behind, from the right hand and from the left, and Thou dost encompass us round about. Great is Thy love; infinite in tenderness Thy compassion. We call Thee man, because then we can touch Thee; we call Thee God, because then Thou canst lift us up beyond all mortal strength and fix us in absolute security. Thou art man-God, God-man, Immanuel—God with us—never to be explained, always to be felt; a living presence, a voice subdued to whispering; an arm unseen but invincible. Teach us Thy way; help us to love Thy truth. Pardon our sins; show us the meaning of Thy precious blood; and may we find in Thy Cross the centre and the sum of all things, the beginning and the end of the rest which is Thy righteousness, and may we lean our little crosses—so small—against Thine infinite woe. *Amen.*

XV.]

[Scripture Reading : JOB i. 1-17.]

LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, all our life is in Thy hand, so Thou dost send our days to us one by one. May we know them to be Thy days, and feel that we must tell the Lord at last how we have spent His time. Thou hast made us rich in hope. Beyond the cold and the snow we can see the bright spring, and after the storm we know we shall hear the sweet voice of birds. Through this hope we are akin to God. This hope makes us sure that we can never die. Thou dost mean us to find heaven in this hope. As the hope is bright, so may our lives be like it. May we walk as those who hold a promise from God, then our eyes shall look straight on, and our feet shall not turn to the right or to the left. See us as a family uniting in prayer and in the giving of thanks, and let Thy peace be upon us all the day. We always come to Thee in the One Name. It is dear to us. Jesus is our Saviour, and His Cross our hope. May our hearts be like Christ's heart. May all sin be taken away, and may our consciences be at rest. Fit us for the duties of this day. We come to the Strong for strength, and to the Wise for wisdom, and coming in the name of Jesus, we know we shall not come in vain. Lift upon us the light of Thy countenance, and make us glad all the day. May children be good and parents wise; may those who work, work well; may those who suffer bear their suffering with patience. Drive away the enemy when he would come suddenly upon us. May Thy Holy Spirit rule our hearts and minds, and make us truly good.

*"Come, Holy Ghost, and through each heart
In Thy full flood of glory pour;
Who, with the Son and Father, art
One Godhead blessed for evermore.*

*"So shall voice, mind, and strength conspire
Thy praise eternal to resound:
So shall our hearts be set on fire,
And kindle every heart around."*

Amen.

XVI.]

[Scripture Reading : PHILIPPIANS ii. 1-8.]

*"Nature with open volume stands,
To spread her Maker's praise abroad;
And every labour of His hands
Shows something worthy of a God.*

*"I would for ever speak His name,
In sounds to mortal ears unknown;
With angels join to praise the Lamb,
And worship at His Father's throne."*

HOLY ONE, Thy throne is open by way of the Cross: this is the joy of Thy creation, yea, the delight of them that would seek Thee. We see somewhat of Thy throne when we lift up our eyes on high, and behold the splendours that flame in the light. We wonder, we are filled with awe; in that vastness our littleness is lost. Yet hast Thou revealed Thyself unto us as a God nigh at hand, within touch of our trouble; we may see Thee with our hearts if they be pure; we may feel Thy nearness and love, if we be contrite and broken-hearted: with the contrite spirit Thou wilt dwell. We know Thee because we know Thy Son Jesus Christ our Saviour; we have seen Him, therefore we have seen the Father, in all the compassion of His Spirit, in all the plenitude of His power, in all the graciousness of His doctrine. Enable us to tarry long in the school of Christ, to learn of Him, so that at the last we may reflect His example, and walk amongst men as those who have been taught by Jesus. We bless Thee for these desires: they are the miracles of the Holy Ghost; enable us to encourage them, to foster them into greater strength, that they may be to us as lights, and comforts, and joys, when all other lights, and solaces, and delights have fallen away. O Lord, continue Thy mercy, keep back Thy judgments, let the prayers of Thy servants keep back the storm-cloud of Thine anger. O Lord, hear us, and wash us in the atoning blood; cleanse us by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, and make our life richer, greater, grander, day by day, till the sun set, and we pass on to other climes. *Amen.*

XVII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM xciii.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou art King over all ; Thou rulest as Thou wilt ; yet Thou wilt not tell us why Thou dost rule so : but Thou dost work in us the miracle of patience, so that we lovingly and hopefully await the issue, not saying one word until we hear from the heavens, as from the Cross, It is finished. Work in us day by day what patience we need. The tempter means to spoil Thy work and to kill our faith. We know not what he is, whence he comes, what the end will be ; but we believe that he is under Thy power, and that Thou wilt at last crush every foe of purity and righteousness, love and justice, and that Thy universe shall be Thy heaven. Enable us to rest in this truth, and to build our life upon it ; then we shall have no fear, though the cloud be black and the wind be very cold, and the enemy be close at hand ; we shall rise above our fears and doubts ; yea, out of them we shall bring nourishment to our faith and hope, and our joy shall be great because of the nearness of God. Look upon us, we pray Thee ; pity us with Thy love, for we need it all. We have gone astray like lost sheep ; we have turned every one to his own way. We are witnesses against ourselves. There is none righteous, no, not one. Pity us, then, with the love of the Cross, with the compassion of Thine own propitiatory blood, and give us to feel that where sin abounds grace doth much more abound—an infinite sea rolling over some sunken pebble.

The Lord hear the prayers we cannot speak, the uprisings and motionings of our dumb hearts ; multiply our few words into a great intercession, and let all our utterances be repronounced by our Priest in heaven. *Amen.*

XVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM cxxxviii.]

ALmighty GOD, we would come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. We always need Thy mercy. We know this of ourselves. We need not Thine accusation to force us backward into darkness and shame, for we pronounce against ourselves. We have done the things that we ought not to have done, with broken hearts we cry, God be merciful unto us, sinners! Thou dost answer that cry with great love, yea, with the Cross of Christ and with the whole mystery of the atonement. We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son,—how precious who can tell? We know it not; we fall down before the sacred and glowing mystery and say, Herein is love, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We hope to know all the meaning in Thine own good time. What is Thy time, Thou who sittest upon the circle of eternity? All the ages are Thine, and Thou wilt give them unto us for study and worship and service, and all our exercises shall be filled with ineffable delight.

The Lord come to us day by day, like a new glory, yet a familiar morning, surprising us always, yet always touching some sacred memory of love: thus shall we grow in grace and knowledge, and pureness and manhood, and our whole life shall lie towards heaven. May Thy word dwell in us richly—an answer to every temptation, a shield, a buckler, and a sword in the day of war. Now, behold us, and continue Thy love toward us, and graciously dwell with us. Oh that we might live in God, as revealed to us by Jesus Christ His Son. *Amen.*

XIX.]

[Scripture Reading: LUKE vi. 1-19.]

*"Long as I live I'll bless Thy name,
My King, my God of love;
My work and joy shall be the same
In the bright world above.*

*"Great is the Lord, His power unknown,
And let His praise be great:
I'll sing the honours of Thy throne,
Thy works of grace repeat."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thy goodness is round about us, and it compels us to give praise unto Thy name. All that we see is full of God, all that we hear cometh down from heaven, and is full of the music of the better land. We desire, therefore, to be found grateful before God. Let there be no ungrateful moment in all the course of our life; may we be known for our thankfulness as those who receive good seed into good ground, and bring honour unto the name of their Master and Lord. We bless Thee for Thy rich mercy, Thy patient care, Thy continual watchfulness. Thou art redeeming us every hour of our life. Be Thou ever near us, for if we are left to ourselves, that shall be the moment of loss and ruin. Hold Thou us up, and we shall be safe; put round us the arms of everlasting defence, and then the enemy shall not come near us; in the time of our hunger and thirst do Thou give us satisfaction from the Cross of Christ; in the hour of weariness do Thou carry us up the steep road. In our faintness and utter loneliness, when the sense of orphanage comes upon us, and the whole life is one bare wilderness to our eyes, then let Thy Fatherhood come down upon us as a mighty revelation, as a complete succour, as a thorough and abiding defence, and in the Fatherhood of God, made known to us through Jesus Christ the Saviour alone, may we find completeness of character, entireness of rest, yea, even the peace which passeth all understanding. And when this time of trial is done, and the poor, cold, grey twilight vanishes, may our eyes be open to behold the morning, and to see the King in the fulness of His beauty. *Amen.*

XX.]

[*Scripture Reading*: MATTHEW vii. 13-20.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, what is our life? It is Thy gift; it is Thy mystery. Out of it Thou wilt bring Thine own purposes, sacred and good and complete. We can only wait; we cannot hasten time. We know not what shall be on the morrow, though it is so near. Is not life a continual vision? Is not every day a revelation from heaven? Thou dost distinguish between the days, though oftentimes we cannot do so. One day so like another—who but God can tell the difference in tone, in colour, and in meaning? Yet every day nearer the end. How solemn: how grand: how joyful! Bring us to a clear understanding of Thy purpose in our existence. Show us that we are meant to be accepted in the Beloved; that our completeness is in Christ, and in Him alone. Reveal to us in our weakness and helplessness the infinite strength of the Son of God, and, by the mystery of the Cross and the wondrous offering of the blood of Christ, may we come into peace with God. Spare us yet a little longer, if haply we may more clearly see the meaning of life, and more earnestly carry out Thy purpose in the gift. Thou hast attached unto life a strange enjoyment. Even in darkness there is a secret joy of heart in living; even on the stony and uphill road, amid danger and desolation, life has a joy of its own. Surely here is the hint of immortality. Surely in this joy is the seal of our Divine creation. Enable us to see all life in Christ Jesus: to work in His inspiration and under the comfort of His grace, so that at the last we may be found clothed with the garment of Christ's own purity, complete in Him, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

May grace, mercy, and peace be our heritage and our joy until life's little day is past. *Amen.*

XXI.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM ciii. 8-14.]

ALmighty GOD, Thou art always surprising us with Thy love. Thou dost give largely unto us, and yet, behold, all Thy resources remain untouched : the river of God is full of water. Give unto us, we humbly pray Thee, the right spirit, the holy temper, the serene and contented disposition, a childlike longing after God : thus shall all prayer be answered in one sweet benediction.

LORD JESUS, Giver of all good gifts, grant us Thy peace ; not as the world giveth dost Thou give, for there is no begrudging in Thy love, and no withdrawment of Thy grace ; we will have nothing that Thou dost not give or sanction or bless. Help us to empty our hearts of all vanity, worldliness, and self-love, and enable us to throw open our whole heart to receive the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost ; thus create heaven in our souls ; whilst we are upon earth give us visions celestial ; confidences that cannot be shaken, sure tokens of Thy presence and nearness and love ; then shall our troubled life bring with it mysterious gladness, and even in the darkness of the night we shall hear voices as of song. Saviour of the World, wounded in both hands, wounded in both feet, pierced in the side, crowned with thorns, remember us in Thy kingdom ; by Thy holy blood purge us from all sin ; by Thy sacred agony take away our sorrow ; by Thy mysterious propitiation grant us eternal cleansing from all corruption. We will live at Thy Cross, we will wait at Thy tomb, we will hail Thee as Thou comest to us on the Sabbath morning brighter than the dawning glory ; and we shall yet—all darkness past, all storm outridden—sit with Thee in heavenly places, and learn from Thee still more of the mystery of light and the mystery of love. *Amen.*

XXII.]

[Scripture Reading : JOHN i. 1-14.]

ALMMIGHTY GOD, we have come by the way which Thou hast appointed to seek the very sanctuary of Thy presence. Show Thyself unto Thy servants, O Lord ; answer the cry of our hearts by the vision of Thyself. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, then we shall see God ; Thou wilt be on our right hand and on our left, above, beneath, around. Thy hand will be laid upon us, and we shall know what it is to live and move and have our being in God.

We bless Thee for Jesus Christ, Thy Son. By Him we know all the things which we may know within the limits of time. He is the Door, the Way, the Truth, the Light, the Vine, the Bread, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. He called Thee our Father, and blessed Thee in heaven. He pointed out all beautiful things, and said Thou didst nourish them and bring them to their loveliness ; He pointed to the fowls of the air, and said Thou dost feed them every one ; then He told us of Thy greater care for greater lives, and drew us into a secret place, and told us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things needful should be added unto us. We would live in Christ's Spirit ; we would not understand it only, we would exemplify it, we would show that in a world of care we are without anxiety, and that in a life which is all trial we are not disquieted, but are at peace. These desires uplift the heart ; how good it is to talk with Thee ; communing with God, we forget all time and space, and are already in the heavens, whose day is all morning, whose service is all rest.

*"Talk with us, Lord, Thyself reveal,
While here o'er earth we rove ;
Speak to our hearts, and let us feel
The kindling of Thy love.*

*"With Thee conversing, we forget
All time and toil and care ;
Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
If Thou, my God, art here."*

Amen.

XXIII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM CXXIV.]

TO THEE, O LORD, we owe all we are and have that is good, and to Thee alone shall be the praise. Thou hast done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Thou hast built our house and kept our city, and Thou didst stand by our side when men rose up against us. God's holy Name be praised. Guide us in all our ways, and give us the joy of being upright in heart. Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, we come to renew our spiritual strength, and to seek defence and guidance in view of all our work this day. Keep us this day without sin. May the lamp of Thy truth burn brightly within us. May Thy law be our counsel and standard in all things. May we set the Lord always before us. Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

For Thy dear Son's sake, bless the families that put their trust in Thee. Bless the little child in the nursery, the boys and girls at school, and the young men in business; forget not hoary hairs that are in the way of righteousness, and comfort all who are called to test Thy grace in suffering, lest the waters overwhelm them and the proud waters go over their soul. Saviour, gentle, mighty, Son of God, keep our eyes from tears, our feet from falling, and our soul from death. Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

OUR FATHER, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. We are longing for Thy kingdom, yea, our hearts are crying—Lord Jesus, come quickly.

The Lord bless us, and keep us. The Lord make His face shine upon us, and be gracious unto us. The Lord lift up His countenance upon us, and give us peace. *Amen.*

XXIV.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM viii.]

OUR FATHER, which art in heaven, we come to Thee in the Name of Jesus Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us. We would begin the day with God that we may end it with praise. What is man that Thou art mindful of him? Are we not made in Thine image? Are we not fashioned in the likeness of God? Thou art our Father, therefore will we love Thee; our Saviour, therefore will we trust Thy strength. If we could but feel Thee near us to do us good, we would rejoice and be glad all the day. We know that Thou lovest us, because Thou didst not spare Thine only begotten Son, and we know that Jesus loves us because He came to save us. Why, then, should we be afraid, or why should our spirits be disquieted within us? Oh that we could rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. Some have to carry a great load; Lord, give them strength. Some know the bitterness of silent grief; Lord, speak comfortably unto them. Others are full of prosperity and gladness; Lord, save them from the vanity of self-trust. According to our need we pray Thee to help us, every one, through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, our Saviour. The master and the servant are Thine; the old man and the little child are both in Thy great household; give each a Father's blessing,—a morning smile,—a token of love.

The very God of peace sanctify us wholly. The Lord of peace Himself give us peace always by all means. Give us the Saviour's peace.

*"We ask not, Father, for repose
Which comes from outward rest,
If we may have through all life's woes
Thy peace within our breast.*

*"That peace which suffers and is strong,
Trusts where it cannot see,*

*Deems not the trial-way too long,
But leaves the end with Thee.*

*"O Father, give our hearts this peace,
Whate'er the outward be,
Till all life's discipline shall cease,
And we go home to Thee."*

Amen.

XXV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : JOHN viii. 33-44.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, coming to a King, what shall we ask for? Thou dost encourage us to open our mouth widely, and Thou wilt fill it. Giving doth not impoverish our Father: the river of God is full of water. Enable us to ask such things as will be really useful to us in assisting the growth of the soul, and in bringing us into closer and more loving relation to Thyself. We would pray in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Name which makes all-prevailing prayer possible: there is no other Name given under heaven among men that can touch the soul and draw out the whole spirit towards God; nor is there any other Name that represents to us Thy love and Thy righteousness, Thy mercy and Thy law. Jesus Christ Thy Son is not our Teacher only, He is our priest, He is our propitiation; by Him we have received the gospel of reconciliation. We would therefore pray in His Name for a double portion of the Holy Spirit, Spirit Divine, Spirit Eternal, Holy One: may He dwell in us, and sanctify us, body, soul, and spirit, making us wholly Thine. Thou hast made us, and not we ourselves; we are the work of Thine own hands, ruined indeed, shattered, despoiled, every line of beauty marred; still, we are Thine, and Thou wilt not forsake the work of Thine own hand. Nor dost Thou forsake any of us; we are living witnesses to Thy goodness, Thy care, Thy patience, Thy long-continued, ineffable love. Thou hast given us bread for the table, Thou hast found water for us in our thirst. Continue to hold us in Thy right hand; continue mercifully to guide us, uphold us, and perfect us in wisdom and goodness: may our whole soul be Thine in all its thought and fire and purpose and energy. This is our prayer. We leave it at the Cross. *Amen.*

XXVI.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN iii. 1-13.]

*"The Spirit breathes upon the word,
And brings the truth to sight:
Precepts and promises afford
A sanctifying light."*

*"A glory gilds the sacred page
Majestic, like the sun;
It gives a light to every age;
It gives, but borrows none."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, who can understand Thy word but they to whom the spirit of interpretation is given? We bless Thee that this spirit is not priestly but spiritual, and of the nature of sympathy:—blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, and follow all the music of His word, and understand all His doctrine and all His desire. By pureness of heart we would read the deeper things of Thy word. Work in us the mighty miracle of holiness, that because of a mind free from all the dominion of the flesh we may see the invisible kingdom, and feel how near is the throne of the living God. We bless Thee if we have tasted that the Lord is gracious: now would we accept the invitation which says, Eat and drink abundantly, O beloved. We would be satisfied with the riches of Thy goodness. Grant unto us the Spirit of Christ. May we live in Christ, may Christ live in us: may we be able to speak words which to others are full of contradiction, saying, I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. Thus by the love of Christ within us may we seize upon the kingdom of heaven, in all its length and breadth, in all its light and peace, in all its glory and rest, and out of the opening heavens may there come to us the spirit of assurance and deepest conviction. The Lord hear us in these things, and grant unto us, by means of His providence and spiritual instruction and silent monition, that we may come to be perfect in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

XXVII.]

[Scripture Reading : HEBREWS vii. 1-14.]

BLESSED FATHER, we seek Thy face. Nothing less will satisfy our heart's desire. Show Thyself to our inmost thoughts, and give us glimpses of Thy beauty when our eyes are wearied by this world's mocking fascinations. Make Thyself specially known to us in our ever-increasing holiness; when we are holy as Thou art holy, then shall we know of a truth that we have fellowship with the Father. Help us also to hold spiritual dominion over the flesh; may we walk not after the flesh but after the spirit, and hold in constant sacrifice the powers and desires of the body. A sight of Thee will be more than heaven to our souls. Thy presence will turn our night into day; Thy voice will reduce to harmony the discords of a life which is full of trouble. We wait for Thee. Our love watches with joyful eagerness for every sign of Thy drawing nigh; our heart is as a prepared guest-chamber awaiting Thine arrival. Oh that Thou mightest come quickly, and bless us with a gracious surprise. We will expect Thee: our eyes shall turn heavenward: we will promise our hearts an early visit of Thy love: men shall know that we wait for the living God. Do Thou keep our souls in the assurance of Thy presence, and care, and infinite mercy: so shall we escape all the vain inquietudes of life. If Thou dost forget us, our day becomes night; when Thou dost remember us, the darkness of the night cannot hide the glory of Thy face from us. If for a small moment Thou dost forsake us, with great mercies Thou wilt gather us.

*"Creator Spirit! by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,
Come, visit every pious mind;
Come, pour Thy joys on human kind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make Thy temples worthy Thee.*

*"Immortal honour, endless fame,
Attend the Almighty Father's name:
The Saviour Son be glorified,
Who for lost man's redemption died:
And equal adoration be,
Eternal Paraclete, to Thee."*

Amen.

XXVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: LUKE viii. 4-15.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we would sing to Thee night and day, because Thy mercy continueth evermore. New mercies demand new songs, then where shall our praises end? Every breath we draw is a new mercy, a new gift, involving a new responsibility. Our breath is in our nostrils, yet we shall live for ever. We cannot tell what a day may bring forth, but we know that all time is bringing forth God's eternity. We know not the hour of our departure, but we know that we shall certainly go past the shadows into the light, because of the Cross, in which we have put our whole faith. The Cross of Christ is our refuge, our answer to every accusation, the comfort of our conscience, the reply to our reason, the challenge to our faith. God forbid that we should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We can understand little of anything, but we can understand at least the beginning of love. Herein is love, that Christ died for us. God is love. Every day is a revelation of love; every gift of God is a new seal of love. We live in love, because we live in God, and God is love. This is enough for the soul. We cannot understand the difficulty, and the mystery, and the high reasoning, nor need we: we pillow our aching heads on God's love; we rest our aching hearts on God's eternal affection. Help us to live this life nobly, bravely, usefully; may it be no sentiment with us, but a noble, continuous, unchangeable inspiration, always leading us to sacrifice, to charity, to some new revelation of our better self, so that men may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. Give us Thy Holy Spirit; Eternal, Holy Ghost, dwell in us; and the days shall be shorter and fewer than ever, for we shall feel that we are already with the Lord. *Amen.*

XXIX.]

[*Scripture Reading* : JOHN xiv. 1-14.]

SON OF GOD, have mercy upon us ! If Thou wilt say unto us, What will ye ? our answer shall be—Lord, that we might receive our sight ! This prayer we pray to Thee every morning, that the day may not be lost to us because of dimness of vision. We know not what angels come forth from the opening gate of heaven dawn by dawn, and it may be that because our eyes are not anointed we see nothing of the descending hosts, and because our ears are dull of hearing, we hear nothing of their sweet gospels. We would have all our faculties inspired ; we would be sensitive to every breath of heaven, answering the glance of every star, replying in tender love and gratitude to the fragrance of every flower.

Make us wholly like Thyself, sweet Jesus, eternal Christ, only-begotten of the Father. We would grow up into Christ in all things ; day by day we would evolve into larger manhood, into nobler spiritual dignity, and daily would we acquire wisdom upon wisdom, until all ignorance and superstition and folly be driven away from the mind. We rejoice in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free. Once we were slaves ; if not to others we were slaves to ourselves : but Jesus Christ hath spoken the emancipating word, and now we stand in liberty, and we hear His blessed voice, saying, If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. Thou hast delivered us from unbelief, from darkness, from despondency, and Thou hast brought us to see that there can be but one God, and that His will must be wise and good. Thou knowest us altogether. Thou knowest what we each most need. Lord, shower Thy benediction upon us, the river of Thy love can flow through any channel, and wheresoever the river cometh there is life.
Amen.

XXX.]

[Scripture Reading : I THESSALONIANS V. 1-13.]

*"Come to our poor nature's night,
With Thy blessed inward light,
Holy Ghost, the Infinite;
Comforter Divine.*

*"We are sinful—cleanse us, Lord;
Sick and faint—Thy strength afford,
Lost,—until by Thee restored,
Comforter Divine."*

MERCIFUL FATHER, Thy Spirit can revive and sustain our minds, and make our hearts warm with the love of the Cross. We look therefore unto the Holy Spirit, that He may dwell in us, and rule over us, and subdue us wholly to His blessed will. In time past we have walked in ignorance, not knowing the right hand from the left, not distinguishing between light and darkness; we have done foolishly, and we have been found in places and paths that are forbidden: but now if the Holy Ghost will make each heart His temple, and dwell in us, we shall do wrong no more, we shall love the light, do that which is good, and follow that which is lovely and of good report, and our whole life shall be beautiful with spiritual fruitfulness.

Be pitiful to those whose lives are weary, whose progress through life is a toil, and who look forward but without hopefulness, backward but without pleasure. Thou knowest the sufferings, the tortures, the perplexities, the distresses, and the disappointments which make up our experience: teach us some great doctrine by which we shall be able to regard such experiences as part of a larger discipline, and so inspire us with Christian hope that we shall glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation is a fountain that ought to bring forth sweet waters.

The Lord grant unto us a true view of the Cross of Christ, showing us what it means, what it expects, what obligations it creates; and may we, by the enduring, all-ruling, all-blessing Holy Spirit, answer the appeal of the Cross with instant and cordial obedience. *Amen.*

XXXI.]

[*Scripture Reading* : JOHN xvii. 1-14.]

GRACIOUS FATHER, Thou dost mean us to bring forth fruit that shall please Thee. Thou dost look for fruit; Thou wilt not be satisfied without it. Under what ministries of providence have we lived: and yet how little has been the result! Thou hast renewed Thy compassions every morning, and Thy faithfulness every evening; Thou hast liberally supplied our want, as a father giving to his children with both hands. O that we had hearkened to Thy commandments and kept Thy laws! then had our peace flowed like a river, and our righteousness had been as the waves of the sea.

We have done the things we ought not to have done. If we have done anything that pleaseth Thee, behold Thou didst work this miracle, our poor hands wrought none of it; to God's Name be praise; to the Holy One of Israel be every psalm of adoration and hymn of thankfulness. We give ourselves into Thy keeping day by day; we would not be orphans even for one day; we should die with cold, and solitude, and want. Be nearer to us, nearer still. Thou knowest us altogether: leave us not for one moment; keep evermore shining before us all the glory of the Cross; may we find in that Cross the mystery of righteousness and the mystery of love, the mystery of forgiveness—the grandest mystery of all; and may we know that our sins, more in number than the sands upon the seashore, have been forgiven because of the Cross of Christ. Thou hast made us, and we are Thine: take us where Thou wilt,—by land, by sea; in the city, in the forest: where Thou wilt, so that at the judgment our faces may be without a cloud and our hearts without a doubt.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

XXXII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: 1 PETER i. 13-25.]

JESUS saith, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Lord, lift upon us the light of Thy countenance and show us the path of life. Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we are the living, the living to praise Thee. We return to Thee with a new song, because of Thy lovingkindness and tender mercy. Thou hast not forsaken the work of Thine own hands, but hast comforted us with exceeding love. In our days there has been a light above the brightness of the sun, and in our night the very darkness has been round about us like an appointed defence. We therefore come before Thy presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. We have nothing that we have not received. Thou didst cause our bread to grow in the field, and out of the clouds hast Thou poured water for our thirst. Thou didst find wool for our garments, and out of Thine own rocks have we built our habitations. All is Thine. Of Thine own have we given Thee.

Show us, O our Father, that Thine eye is upon us for good, and that all Thy promises are at our disposal, so shall we be made strong, and our strength shall become our joy. Hear us for ourselves, for our friends, for little children, for suffering lives, for hard hearts, and for the souls that never pray. We come with these our prayers, these cries of want, because of the authority and encouragement of Christ Jesus our Lord. Pity us, we beseech Thee. Pardon our offences; wash us in the precious blood of Christ. Abide with us evermore. Holy Spirit, make us Thy temples. *Amen.*

XXXIII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : JOHN XV. 1-8.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, help us to know that we have not life in ourselves, and that we only live truly as we live, move, and have our being in God. We bless Thee that as this idea inspires our life, we triumph over trouble and persecution, yea, over disease and death, and are no longer the victims of circumstances, but live a life that cannot be touched by the enemy, imperishable as Thine own eternity.

We desire that this life of ours may be properly understood by every one of us, saving us from mistaking its beginning, its progress, and its destiny. May we trace it back to Thine own gift; may we accept it as a stewardship, and a preparation, may we look forward to its great and immeasurable development in the worlds which are yet to admit us to their inheritance. Save us from despair; when the shadows of melancholy thicken too deeply around us, send a sudden light to surprise us again into the gladness of filial confidence and Christian hope, that thus being tried, perplexed, annoyed by many occurrences, we may yet be recovered and our life be sanctified and our whole being become a living sacrifice unto the Lord.

We humbly pray Thee to forgive our sins. We confess them all, we withhold nothing, we pour the tale of our guilt into the ear of Thy pity, not into the ear of Thy righteousness; we come to Thy mercy not to Thy law, to the Cross of Christ not to the bar of judgment, and throwing ourselves before Emmanuel, God with us, and looking up to His anguish, His priestly offering, His vicarious death, each would say for himself, out of a heart pierced with remorse, God be merciful to me a sinner. Wash us in the holy blood, in the untainted stream, and out of that river may we emerge, comely with the holiness of Christ. *Amen.*

XXXIV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : MATTHEW xiv. 14-21.]

BLESSED LORD, behold us at the mercy-seat, gathered in the Name of our Elder Brother, Thy Son our Saviour, and hear our thanksgiving and our petition. O God, Thou art our God, early will we seek Thee. As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth our soul after Thee, O God.

Saviour of the World, in the pitifulness of Thy great mercy, help us and save us, we humbly beseech Thee. The day is to us a mystery, but before Thee it is spread out in all its meaning. We would walk all day with God, then the day will be a blessing, even in its trials and burdens, and at eventide we shall not be left without light and peace. Saviour, take hold of our hand and guard us from stumbling; breathe into our hearts that we may live on Thy promises; and watch our lips that we sin not against Thee with our tongue. We would be pure and strong; we would be wise and gentle; we would be true and kind. Save us from the self-denial which becomes self-idolatry, and teach us so to deny ourselves as to help those who need human pity and human aid. May we not live unto ourselves, but unto the Lord who bought us, and like Him may we go about doing good.

Let Thy blessing come upon us and upon all other families that call upon Thy name. Set a light in the dwelling of them that love Thee, and guard the homes of the just. Let little children be Thy delight. To the sick and the dying send flowers from heaven. On the perplexed and disheartened send a delivering light. To the prodigal send messages from home. Amend our prayers that they may be worthy of answer, and keep us evermore near the Cross of our salvation. *Amen.*

XXXV.]

[Scripture Reading: EPHESIANS ii. 1-10.]

*"All praise to Thee, who safe hast kept,
And hast refreshed me whilst I slept!
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,
I may of endless life partake.*

*"Lord, I my vows to Thee renew:
Disperse my sins as morning dew;
Guard my first springs of thought and will,
And with Thyself my spirit fill."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we bless Thee for the life that cannot die. Thou hast clothed us with a body which we must shed, it must return to the dust, and be forgotten, but the soul which Thou didst fashion in Thine image shall live for ever. The soul is blinded by the body, the body often overwhelms the spirit, imprisons it, mocks it, but the reign of the body is only for a moment, its conquests cannot endure. Help us to claim our better selves, our higher manhood, and to live in all thought and feeling that is uppermost and therefore nearest God. We have often sinned against Thee with the body when we did not mean to sin against Thee with the soul: Thou knowest the mystery; Thou rememberest that we are but dust, therefore in wrath Thou dost remember mercy.

We would live in Christ, and living in Christ we must live for Christ, doing His will, explaining His word, following His command, and realising in obedience the beginning and the security of heaven. Save us from ourselves, save us from our senses, save us from the mistakes of our own cleverness, and may we live and move and have our being in Thee. Dry our tears when they would blind us to Thy presence; sanctify them when they would show us larger revelations of Thy purpose. Our burden is heavy, but it is only for a day; behold the sunset hasteneth, and when the time comes the burden shall fall off for ever. Give us joy in these thoughts; yea deliverance from darkness and despair and all manner of humiliating fear, and may we stand in the sublimity of trust, and work in all the tenderness of childlike obedience. Lord, hear our prayer, and let our cry come unto Thee. *Amen.*

XXXVI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: 2 CORINTHIANS V. 1-7.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, our faces are towards the upper city, where shineth the eternal glory. Once our faces were turned towards the dust: Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our one Redeemer, met us, spoke to us, instructed us, and we have been enabled by the power of His word to look upward and see that beyond all time, all care, there lies a land all summer. We have heard of Thy garden in Eden, growing sweet flowers, full of singing birds, the trees loaded with fruit; we have heard of the beguiling serpent, the forbidden act, the following penalty. All this we have seen too in our own history. We know it to be true. We know nothing of the letter, but we know the spirit to be real: all the meaning is in ourselves; we have seen the garden of delight; we have done the things we ought not to have done; we have realised the meaning of nakedness; we know what it is to have been driven forth into the wilderness where no flower grows, where no fountain springs. But we have seen Jesus, and we begin our history with that interview. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away, all things have become new. We have all things in Christ; yea, we abound in riches; when we have taken most we have left most behind: thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. How wrong we have been, how unfaithful, how wicked! We charge folly upon our best thoughts, and we see the standard to be too lofty to allow us to boast of our progress: still we are growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and sometimes our hearts are full of a sacred assurance that even yet we shall triumph in all things and be one and for ever with the Lord.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.

Amen.

XXXVII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : MATTHEW xiv. 22-33.]

BLESSED SAVIOUR, we love to think of Thee as ever living to make intercession for us. Made in Thine image, we were surely made for Thy glory, and to this end Thou art working out all the mystery of our present imperfect life. Help us to believe this with our whole heart, that we be not driven about as those who have no centre of rest. If we love Thee all things will work together for our good ; yea, the furnace shall be as a sanctuary, and the wilderness shall be our Father's school. Comfort us, Saviour, according to the fulness of Thy grace. Lord, increase our faith. We who have believed do enter into rest. Thou dost promise rest unto those who come unto Thee. Lord, we have come, now give us peace. We would labour to enter into rest, lest we fall through unbelief. That we may enjoy Thy rest, first help us to do Thy work. Teach us the largeness of Thy work, show us that it covers the whole space of life, and that to do it well we must give Thee every moment of time.

Lord, sanctify us, body, soul, and spirit ; make us wholly and always Thine. Our hope is in the Eternal Priest, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Our hope shall never be disappointed. After life's winter we shall see God's summer. Our hearts leap with joy as we near the garden of the Lord. Some waft of its odour mingles with the cold winds of earth, and assures us that the King's garden cannot be far away. Help us to work and suffer another day in Christian patience and hope. Sanctified labour will be rest ; sanctified affliction will be gladness ; sanctified hope will be immortality. Hide not Thyself from our petition, but humble Thyself to accept the prayer which we now leave at the Saviour's Cross. *Amen.*

XXXVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: I PETER i. 1-12.]

WE come unto Thee, Father and Lord, to speak of Thy goodness, yet we know not where to begin ; so great has Thy goodness been, and so wonderful Thy tender care of our life. Every moment Thou hast been near us, and every day has witnessed Thy miracles of patience. Thou dost daily load us with benefits, and by night Thou dost renew us with sleep. Surely we are more than the creatures of a day, or Thou wouldst not lavish upon us this wealth of love. Not for the body only, but for the soul hast Thou spread Thy feast. Thou givest light to our reason, wisdom to our understanding, comfort to our heart, and answers of peace to our best desires. If Thou dost withhold aught from us it is for our good. Thou answerest our prayers that we may pray the more. Thy goodness is Thy greatness, and Thy greatness is unsearchable. Blessed be the Name of the Lord, for His mercy endureth for ever.

Our desire is to follow our blessed Lord in all things, in His thought, and motive, and service : in the love which never shrank from sacrifice, and in the benevolence which sought and saved the lost. To this end we pray for the Holy Ghost, that He may renew and teach and comfort and sanctify us, body, soul, and spirit. Great is the gift we seek, but great is the Giver to whose mercy-seat we have open access, and great the promise given to us by our dying, yet living Lord. Earth is full of mystery. Life shows so little of itself within this narrow limit of time that we know not all its meaning. Yet duty is before us, and must be bravely done. Sorrow troubles us, and must be wisely borne. The day makes its demand, and must be patiently obeyed. Therefore do we wait upon God that our strength may be renewed. *Amen.*

XXXIX.]

[*Scripture Reading* : I CORINTHIANS iii. 10-23.]

*" My God, my Father, blissful Name !
O may I call Thee mine ?
May I with sweet assurance claim
A portion so divine ?*

*" This only can my fears control,
And bid my sorrows fly.
What harm can ever reach my soul
Beneath my Father's eye ?"*

OUR FATHER, help us to know what is meant by our being Thy children, lest we be afraid of Thee, and stand away in darkness when we should stand in light and joy. If we are Thine Thou wilt take care of us, and show us what to do that will be good for the time that now is, and the time that is to come. All night Thou hast kept us in peace. All day Thou wilt guide us in safety. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, therefore there shall be no want to them that put their trust in Him. This day we would be filled with the love of Christ, and would walk as children of light; free to do all that is good, but having no liberty in wrong-doing and folly. Cleanse our hearts that we may have clearness of vision, and make our motives holy, so that our lives may be lived in simplicity. If the day's task is to be hard, give us strength and skill to do it; if we must feel the weight and pain of sorrow, nourish us with sufficient grace; if in anything we are to be taken by perilous surprise, give us steadfastness and sobriety of mind. In all things may we trust in the living Christ who loved us and gave Himself for us. For His Cross we ever bless Thee. It is Thy love made glorious. It is our sin made visible. God keep us every one. God bless children, friends, sufferers, all good teachers, and all wise thinkers. Look lovingly upon the sick. Speak a word in season to him that is weary. Give us faith that when life's veil is rent and the hidden thought is made clear, we shall see that God is love. In this faith we would enter upon this day and use it as another gift of God. Grace, mercy, and peace be our portion until the end. *Amen.*

XL.]

[Scripture Reading : JOHN xi. 45-54.]

ALmighty GOD, Thou art the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort. Thou hast been mindful of us in our low estate ; every breath we have drawn has been of importance to Thee, as though we were necessary to the completeness of Thine own joy ; Thine arms have been round about us, the stars have watched us in the night-time, and the sun has been above us as a benediction all the day ; our bread and our water have been made holy by the creation within us of a consciousness of Thy presence, Thy goodness, Thy nearness, Thy love. Fill us with Thine own eternity, assure us of our immortality ; then shall we be calm, resigned, expectant, triumphant ; yea, we shall glory in tribulations also.

The Lord make us valiant for the truth ; show us that the truth is larger than we are ; show us that we can but know in part, and, therefore, should prophesy but in part : give us the modesty which increases authority : bless us with the charity which is grander than genius. The Lord help us in all things to prove our apostleship by meekness and gentleness, by fervour and unselfishness, by such a spiritual perception of Divine things as shall compel men to feel that God is nearer than they first thought. We come to the Cross ; at the Cross we pray ; it is an altar which reaches even unto heaven ; we pray there that we may be taught how to pray, that we may pray until we can praise, and even until we know that the answer of God's love is burning in our hearts. Wash us in the blood of Christ ; cleanse us from every deed of sin. Mighty Holy Spirit, God the Holy Ghost, live in us and make us wholly Thine.

*"Drawn to the Cross which Thou hast blessed
With healing gifts for souls distressed,
To find in Thee my Life, my Rest,
Christ Crucified, I come.*

*"Stained with the sins which I have wrought
In word and deed and secret thought,
For pardon which Thy Blood hath bought,
Christ Crucified, I come."*

Amen.

XLI.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN XV. 12-20.]

*"Sinful, sighing to be blest,
Bound, and longing to be free,
Weary, waiting for my rest,
'God be merciful to me!'"*

*"There is One beside the throne,
And my only hope and plea
Are in Him, and Him alone,
'God be merciful to me!'"*

ALMIGHTY GOD, if Thou wilt say unto each of us, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee, we shall be free, and glad with an unspeakable joy. Who can forgive sins but God only? Against God only have we sinned and done wickedness: aught we can do against one another is done against God. Help us to search into the root of this matter; save us from healing the hurt of our soul slightly; may we search into realities; may we know the living, awful secret of our life; then shall we know that no man can touch that secret healingly, forgivingly, permanently; then we shall know that the blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son alone cleanseth from all sin. Thou dost search the heart and try the reins of the children of men. Inspire within us the ardour which exclaims, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me. Give us the wrestling power; in the exercise of that power we shall find success. Thou dost yield to importunity; Thou dost lay down Thine almightiness before the tears of the broken heart; at the Cross Thou art full of love. We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and left undone those things we ought to have done. Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Spirit of the living God, have mercy upon us. In Thy mercy is love, light, hope, joy, heaven. Oh teach us in every strain the heart can understand and answer that Thy mercy endureth for ever.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

XLII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: I JOHN iv. 1-8.]

ALmighty GOD, teach us the meaning of love, for we know it not, though we speak it often. When we say we love God, may our heart go with our word. If we loved Thee we would serve Thee, but, Lord, we are frail and weak, and blind and foolish. Deliver us from this base hypocrisy and make us real. Show us that charity is the end of the commandment: put within us Thy love; it is a fire, it burns hotly to the destruction of every corrupt thing, and to the testing of all true gold. May the love of Christ constrain us, then our service will be rest, and our self-indulgence will be toil.

We bless Thee for a gospel of love; we rejoice that when the heavens were opened and Thy voice was heard it was a voice of love, and our highest rapture is to remember that Jesus Christ came to show the love of God which passeth understanding. God is love; may we dwell in God, and may God dwell in us, and may our name be another name for love. Wondrous love, redeeming love: it believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; it never faileth; it is like Thyself, yea, love is of God. God be merciful unto us sinners. Show us that our habitations are in the dust, and our houses in the clay; teach us that we are born not for earth but for heaven: move us by the recollection of our high ancestry in Christ; stir us with an immortal hope of being for ever with the Lord. May we come to the Cross every day; not to weep there, but to renew our supplications for pardon and our vows of loyalty. Precious is the blood of the Lamb. It is the great, rich gift from the God of heaven. Wash us, cleanse us therein, and our sin shall be taken away for ever. *Amen.*

XLIII.]

[Scripture Reading : I THESSALONIANS IV. 13-18.]

*"Let us with a gladsome mind
Praise the Lord, for He is kind :
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.*

*"Let us blaze His name abroad,
For of gods he is the God :
For His mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure."*

FATHER OF MERCIES and God of all grace, it is a good thing to sing of Thy Name, and tell in grateful words the number of Thy compassions. By humbling us Thou dost make us strong, and by rebuking our pride Thou dost clothe us with true and lasting dignity. When we have taken credit to ourselves Thou hast stained the pride of our glory; but when we have acknowledged Thee, behold Thou hast in mercy directed our paths. In God our Father, made known to us by the Saviour of the world, we have all we need for time and for eternity. The river of God is full of water. At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. All our springs are in Thee. Thou art able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

We come before Thy presence with thanksgiving, for the Lord is our defence, and God is the rock of our salvation. By Thy blessed Spirit we have found the Cross on which our Saviour died for the sins of the world. This is light in darkness. This is a fountain in the desert. This is bread in the stony wilderness. Blessings be upon Him who delivered us from our low estate. We will say of our Redeemer that He is mighty to save. Thou hast raised Him up as an horn of salvation for us, and Thou hast made Him the light of all them that sit in darkness. Our soul doth magnify the Lord, and our spirit doth rejoice in God our Saviour.

The Lord have us in His holy keeping; build us on the rock of truth; light us with the lamp of love; comfort us with the consolations of the Gospel; and bring us at last to the sweet heaven, the green Canaan, where the pasture never fails, where no storm ever rides on the placid wave. *Amen.*

XLIV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : COLOSSIANS ii. 6-17.]

HOLY is the Lord our God, and His Name is excellent in all the earth. He causeth the seasons to pass over the earth, and the whole land to bring forth food for man and beast. He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, nor does He turn away His bounty because of the neglect and indifference of men. The Lord is training us for Himself that we may be made meet for the better things which are in store for our souls. God's Name be praised. God's will be done. Nor would we say this only when the sky is cloudless, and birds are singing in the soft air ; we would say this when the sky is dark with winter, and when the harvest is laid in desolation. Of ourselves we cannot say this, but we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us ; therefore we seek the mighty Saviour day by day that we may be enabled to know the rod and Him who hath appointed it, and to kiss the hand that smites us for our good.

Our days are but a handful, yet Thou, our God, hast made us to know joy even in their fewness. Our days point to the years of Thy right hand, and those years fill up the fulness of Eternity. Every day brings its own revelation of light. In the night-time the stars proclaim the steadfastness of Thy throne. Our days are not complete in themselves. They belong to the Yesterdays of ancient time, and to the Morrows of immeasurable duration. Help us to feel their solemnity as well as their brevity, and to create in them examples which may happily affect the future we may never see.

Lead us through all the way of life, even until we see the light which shines in heaven. Our Saviour's Cross is our altar. Our Saviour's sacrifice our only plea. Let the Lord hear us when we call. *Amen.*

XLV.]

[Scripture Reading: I CORINTHIANS ii.]

FATHER in heaven, we pray that we may realise the indwelling of the Spirit of Thy Son; then we shall be glad and free, full of joy, and our hope shall burn like the sun at noontide. We have heard the words of Jesus. We would be diligent scholars in the school of Christ: reading, inquiring, praying, and where we cannot understand we would adore and wait. If Thou grant unto us the full satisfaction of this desire, the world itself would be too small for us, and time would fall into contempt, and we must needs cry out for the heaven and the heaven of heavens and for all the duration of immortality, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us! If Thou wilt say unto us, What will ye that I should do unto you? our instant reply would be: Lord, that we might receive our sight! Dwell with us; abide with us; scatter the darkness; dissipate our fear; lift up our despondency; and grant unto us that we may stand erect before Thee, accepted in the Beloved. Thy word is truth. We desire that it may be our counsel and our guide, then shall we delight in the sunshine of holiness, and be eager to work in the cause of Him who gave Himself for us. We behold Him, we adore Him, we run to Him with all the eagerness of impelling hunger, and having found Him we will never leave Him again; we will abide at His Cross.

Bless us in the few days we have yet to live; we can count them in a breath. O that they may be golden days, full of service and love: that joy that comes from sympathy with God. Pity our littlenesses, for we are still in the flesh, and set within us Thy kingdom, Thy grace overflowing our sin.

*"Grace! tis a sweet, a charming theme:
My thoughts rejoice at Jesus' Name:
Ye angels, dwell upon the sound!
Ye heavens, reflect it to the ground!"*

*"O may I live to reach the place
Where He unveils His lovely face!
Where all His beauties you behold,
And sing His Name to harps of gold."*

Amen.

XLVI.]

[*Scripture Reading* : MATTHEW vi. 1-15.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we bless Thee for the Lord's Prayer. Lord, teach us also how to pray. May we see no man in this exercise save Jesus only; may we have open and joyous fellowship with the Father through the Son by the mighty and gracious ministry of the Holy Ghost. Draw us very near to Thyself, Thou God of love. The way to the throne is by the Cross. We tarry where the Saviour died; we behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; we plead His sacrifice; we rejoice to know that the blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son cleanseth from all sin. Saviour of the world, draw us to Thyself; when Thou wast lifted up it was that Thou mightest draw all men unto Thee. May we all be attracted to that heavenly love, to that eternal light: to Thine appeal may we all answer gladly; may none make excuse; with all readiness of soul and mind, with all sweet and gracious obedience of will, may we rise and follow Thee with great delight. Pity us in our littlenesses, and vanities, and infirmities. We are of yesterday; we are a wind that cometh for a little time, and then passeth away; we are, as to the body, but like a dying vapour: Thou knowest our frame, Thou rememberest that we are dust; look upon us therefore pityingly when we err and stray from Thee. Pour out Thy blessing upon all the Church of Christ throughout the world: the miracle of Thy love, the triumph of Thy Cross, O Christ. Behold these sheep of Thine everywhere: they are one flock with one Shepherd, and having in hopeful view one heavenly destination. May we not fall out one with another by the way, but, with all love and trustfulness, work one with another, to the end that Thy kingdom may come. This prayer we pray in the Name of Him who loved us and died for us. *Amen.*

XLVII.]

[Scripture Reading: Psalm lxi.]

FATHER OF ALL, graciously look upon us as a family now seeking to behold Thy face. As the morning light is Thine, so the blessing of the whole day must come from Thee. We sing of Thy goodness, for our hearts remember Thy mercy. Thou hast given us freely of Thy bounty, therefore we have suffered no want. What have we that we have not received? We praise Thee that Thou hast given unto us the spirit of thankfulness, so that Thy mercies have not been wholly lost upon us. We find all blessings in the Cross. In Christ we have all things, yea, in Him our riches abound. Because Thou hast found for us a Saviour, Thou wilt find all else we need.

Guide us with Thine eye, we humbly pray Thee, and give Thine angels charge concerning us, lest at any time we dash our foot against a stone. Above all, grant unto us large gifts of the Holy Spirit. We do not pray for bread alone, but for the bread of life that cometh down from heaven. We live in God. We would grow in grace. For one another, and for our absent friends we would fervently pray. Bless the old and the young, and with the sick and the fainting be Thou very gentle. Watch over those who are full of care, and speak comfortably to those to whom wearisome days and nights are appointed. Sanctify our success, and may our failures teach us that it is not in man to direct his way. Go with the child to school, and with the man to business, and may those who stay at home feel themselves under the constant care of God. Lord of heaven and earth, behold us at the Cross, and grant unto us sweet answers of peace.

Grace, mercy, and peace, the gifts and fruits of the Cross, be multiplied unto us day by day. *Amen.*

XLVIII.]

[Scripture Reading : GALATIANS V. 1-15.]

*"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad.*

*"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him."*

OUR FATHER, we believe in Jesus Christ, therefore our hearts are full of hope and confidence, so that we live in the high expectancy of one day seeing Him face to face, and hearing from His own lips all the meaning of the words which He spake for our instruction. Wherein we can seize any part of that meaning now we are glad, and are like those who have found the pearl precious above all other pearls. His words are so lofty, so tender, so musical; they come into our life at all times and make us glad,—now they are like a trumpet-call to battle, and now they are whispered love which the heart alone can hear, receive, and understand. We come to Jesus, for He has offered us rest; we come to Him, for He has the bread of life, and we are hungry; we come to Thy Son who has the living water, because our souls are athirst and the rivers of time cannot quench their burning. We find all in Christ; He has the wise, the gentle, the good, the tender word; He has the music that we can bear to hear when words would be too harsh; He can touch our wound without aggravating its pain; He is the blessed One—Son of Mary, Son of God, Ancient of Days; on His girdle hang the keys of all worlds and mysteries. Son of David, have mercy upon us.

To the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the mystery of being, and the origin of all love, Three in One, One in Three, be the praise of all worlds and all times! *Amen.*

XLIX.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM V.

*"Every morning mercies new
Fall as fresh as early dew;
Every morning let us pay
Tribute with the early day;
For Thy mercies, Lord, are sure,
Thy compassion doth endure.*

*"As the morning light returns,
As the sun with splendour burns,
Teach us still to turn to Thee,
Ever-blessed Trinity,
With our hands our hearts to raise,
In unfailing prayer and praise."*

FATHER OF MERCIES, in the morning shalt Thou hear our voice, for praise is Thy due because of Thy goodness. In peace and safety we have been kept, when we could not keep ourselves; therefore would we bless Thy Name, and sing aloud of Thy love. We would spend this day in the Spirit of Jesus, which is the spirit of obedience and sacrifice; and bear in mind that He went about doing good. We would so use this day as to hear Thee say in the evening: Well done, good and faithful servant. Of our own strength we cannot do this. We pray Thee, therefore, to give us what we need of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may do all Thy will with joy and thanksgiving.

Blessed Jesus, be with us all the day; with the old and with the young; with those who shall go forth and those who shall remain at home. Help us to love one another, and to make each other's life cheerful and useful. May we be ready to forgive. May we see each other's excellences rather than each other's defects, and may our delight as a family be to have Jesus as our constant Guest. Blessed Saviour, if Thou wilt abide under our roof our home shall be none other than the house of God. May the master be gentle and just; may the servant be wise and faithful; may parents be full of love; may children put their trust in God. When our souls are athirst, lead us to the living water; when our life is weary, may we find rest in Thy love; when the storm is loud, may our hearts hear Thy still small voice.

Grace, mercy, and peace be with us evermore. *Amen.*

L.]

[*Scripture Reading*: JOHN ix. 13-25.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, may we be steadfast in the truth of Christ. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways ; he wavereth like a wave of the sea, and is tossed with every wind, and he receives nothing from heaven : he begins and ends in sinful emptiness. May we know the foundation of the Lord, and stand upon it ; may we build our house upon a rock, and not upon the shifting sand ; give us the virtue of steadfastness ; may ours be the constancy of the root also, that we may grow and prove our union with God by leaf and blossom and abundant fruit. The Lord save us from being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine ; give us faithfulness of spirit, intelligent zeal, devotion that cannot be distracted, the loftiness of soul on which there comes no darkness of night. Wherein we have been sinful, inconstant, fickle, changeable, do Thou pardon us, and may we be ashamed of the past, may we be mightily and completely recovered by the redeeming grace of Christ, that henceforth, being no more children, living in uncertainty, we may be as pillars in Thy house. Thou knowest all we are and all we need ; the whole of our life is spread out before Thee, in all its colour and passion, its heat and tumult ; Thou knowest the perils of the sudden changes that fall upon our poor life ; Thou knowest the strength of the enemy ; Thou dost also dig down into our hearts, and Thou seest within us that we give hospitality to sin, while pretending to abhor it. Mysterious life ! Yet it is Thy life, Thy mystery, and Thou wilt redeem us with Thy right hand, and bring us to the home which Thou hast prepared.

To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. *Amen.*

LI.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN i. 38-51.]

*"How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear."*

*"Jesus, my Shepherd, Guardian, Friend;
My Prophet, Priest, and King:
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring."*

MY soul doth magnify the Lord, because of His daily love and continual tenderness. He is all things great and beautiful to those who love Him. He is their Rock, their Shepherd, their Sun and Shield, their Eternal Refuge. He is not wholly turned away, even by our offences, for He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, and His rain is not withheld from fields unblest by prayer. Shall we, then, continue to sin? God forbid. New mercies should mean new songs. Because Thou art good we will sing Thy praise aloud and remember Thee night and day. Let not our sins grieve Thee wholly out of our life; rather may they bring to us new revelations of Thy mercy, and show us some new vision of the Cross.

If the Lord will send us light, our life shall grow like a field sown with good seed, and at the end the harvest will be large. Without God's light we bring forth no good fruit. But that light we may have if we ask for it. We ask for it now, in the Name of our only Saviour. Lord, send forth Thy light! May the Dayspring from on high visit our hearts and give us the dewy and tender joy of morning.

Lord God, the Holy Ghost, fill our mind and heart and soul with the love of Christ. Perfect love casteth out fear. Love is always young. Love is immortality. There is no death in love. God is love. Love is heaven. If our hearts burn with love, evil can have no place in us. Abide with us. Without Thee we are lonely. With Thee we have all heaven. We leave our prayer at the Cross, knowing that Thy blessing is assured to all who pray in the Saviour's Name. *Amen.*

LII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: JOHN X. 1-10.]

*"Was there ever kindest shepherd
Half so gentle, half so sweet,
As the Saviour who would have us
Come and gather at His feet?"*

*"It is God: His love looks mighty,
But is mightier than it seems:
'Tis our Father: and His fondness
Goes far out beyond our dreams."*

THOU who art the Shepherd of men, hear our song of praise for Thy daily goodness. Thou hast laid down Thy life for the sheep. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. We were as sheep going astray, but now we are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Into Thy hands we commit ourselves this day. Lead us forth as Thou wilt; then shall we be safe, and shall go in and out and find pasture. Thou knowest them that trust in Thee. Thou wilt feed the Church which Thou hast purchased with Thine own blood. O Shepherd Divine, enfold us and save us evermore. Teach us that Thy heaven lies all round about us, and give us eyes to see its tender beauty. Save us from all low thoughts, selfish designs, and longing after evil. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from us. May we love all pureness, all beauty, all loveliness. May we think for the thoughtless, and help those who have no strength. Bring the prodigal home. Nurse the sick. To the dying show the city beyond the river, and help them to catch some note of its holy song. God help us all. Christ magnify Himself in our weakness.

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is wellpleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

LIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: ISAIAH xl. 1-11.]

BLESSED FATHER, what help we need Thou knowest. What enemies we shall this day encounter are all known to Thee. Forsake not the work of Thine own hands. Give us to feel that our weakness is our strongest claim upon Thy strength. May we hear a gentle voice whispering to our hearts, He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom. If Thou wilt grant unto us this day such a sense of Thy presence, then shall the day be unto us as a day of the Son of man upon earth; its clouds shall be charged with blessings; and every wind that blows shall bring some message from the better land. We would use this day as Thy gift, and bring it back to Thee at eventide filled with honest work and noble purpose. Our heart's desire is that we may sin no more. O our God, we are ashamed, and blush to lift up our face to Thee; for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up into the heavens. Our iniquities have gone over our heads as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for us. Do we not sin against Thee when we fix our eyes upon our own iniquity, rather than fasten them steadfastly upon the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world? Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. The Lord give us wisdom; the Lord withdraw not His favour from us this day; the Lord minister unto us richly by His Holy Spirit. May we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be unto us, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins.
Amen.

LIV.]

[*Scripture Reading*: JOHN i. 29-37.]

(A MEDITATION PRAYER).

TO go into the future is to go into darkness. Why go into the darkness alone when we may go into it in a full light? God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. He will go before us and prepare the way and make us glad in untried and unknown places. Let us, then, lift up our hearts at the Cross of Christ and seek the continual guidance of God. Lord, the way of life in all its surprise and pain, its temptation and sorrow, we know not, but Thou knowest it all, and for it all Thou wilt prepare the hearts that love Thee. Teach us that our very fear may be made a source of strength by driving us to Thyself. We often dread to-morrow, yea we often tremble under the shadow of the passing day. Now we would be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might and rise above all fear. Work this wonder in our hearts, O Thou who canst alone direct and rule the life of men.

We would see the Lord Christ in His beauty and power and tenderness as the Saviour of the world. If we may see Him thus we shall be blessed with peace and hope. Hear the cry of our hearts, and give us the fulness of our desire. Day by day may we see some new view of Thy love and feel the stirring of Thy Holy Spirit, lest we sink into sleep and wake not into daily newness of life. Be the glory of our days and the security of our nights, and so help us through this short and narrow vale of time.

Thy will be done, O Thou to whom all things belong. Grace, mercy, and peace be with us and in us day by day evermore. *Amen.*

LV.]

[Scripture Reading: HEBREWS xiii. 12-25.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou hast done great things for us, whereof we are glad. We would now give ourselves to Thee in still fuller consecration. We would be found night and day at Thine altar, offering the sacrifice of a loving life and looking unto the Lord who bought us with the price of blood, that we may know His will more clearly and do it with both hands earnestly.

The heavens declare Thy glory, the earth is full of Thy goodness. Her light is little, her glory is nothing, she is but a speck in the infinite whole; but still she is green with God's beauty, fruitful with God's blessing—a sweet little home in the meantime, full of good things, and not without the presence of hope and the promise of still larger space. Thou hast done us good all our days. Thou hast kept us from the grave until now; and all the time Thou hast been preparing us for it by making it more beautiful, and us more tenderly weary for the eternal land.

We thank Thee for all Thy goodness, for all reunion of souls, for the touch of kindly and trustful fellowship, for every hint of heaven. We now give one another to Thee. Thou art near to us, and Thy nearness is our security. The Lord's blessing be richer to us than ever: a wondrous thing, a benison brighter than summer, fuller in all fruition than the abounding autumn, and may our souls be glad in Christ's liberty. Whilst we gaze upon the Cross, may we see, shining above it, the infinite, the eternal crown. So keep us, so heal us, so be kind to us. When our sin rises in reproach in our hearts, send upon us the infinite billows of Thy mercy, compassion, and pardoning love as revealed in the atonement of Christ. *Amen.*

LVI.]

[Scripture Reading: 1 JOHN i.

*"Light up this house with glory, Lord:
Enter, and claim Thine own;
Receive the homage of our souls,
Erect Thy temple-throne.*

*"We rear no altar—Thou hast died;
We deck no priestly shrine;
What need have we of creature-aid?
The power to save is Thine."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we love to think of Thee as the light of our home. When we come before Thee we have no fear, because our trust is in the Saviour who died for us and who lives to make our cause His own. We would ask Thee now for converting grace. May we every one know what it is to be saved by the Lord Jesus Christ. Then our home will be full of light and peace and joy. For those who do love Thee we bless the Saviour. We want all to love Thee: parents, children, servants, friends, not one left unblessed. Make this a great birthday in the family, so that we may rejoice together in heavenly gladness. Thou hast given us all our mercies, and more Thou art prepared to give. Make us all like little children in simplicity and love, and make us all like true men in understanding, and honour, and service. We pray for those who never pray for themselves, and for those who are afraid to pray, and for those whose souls are drawn down to death. It is Thy delight to help us all. May we open our hearts to Thee and tell Thee all our sin, that by the power of the blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son we may be pardoned and healed.

Give us comfort this day, and such a sense of Thy loving presence as will make us strong and useful. All day long may we work in the spirit of prayer, and at eventide we shall worship Thee in grateful praise.

Hide not Thy face from Thy servants. Leave us not, neither forsake us, O God of our salvation. Appear unto Thy servants and comfort us with exceeding grace. *Amen.*

LVII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: HEBREWS vi. 11-20.]

ALMMIGHTY GOD, our hearts go out after Thee in great desire and with all hope. We know that Thou art, and that Thou art the rewarder of all them that diligently seek Thee. Our life without Thee would have been poor and cold, but with Thy love shed abroad in our hearts, it has been lifted up and has laid hold upon immortality and eternal life. Thou art our refuge in the day of distress; we hide ourselves in Thee as in a sanctuary that cannot be violated. Great peace have they that love Thy law; no weapon that is formed against them shall prosper.

We hear the voices of the coming time, and they make us glad with a royal joy. We foresee, through the medium of Thy word, the time when all nations shall know Thee and rejoice in the brightness of Thy light, and know no Name but Thine. This great lesson may we learn at the Cross; we have learned it in the school of Thy Son Jesus Christ, our only Saviour. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied; He shall have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession; His enemies Thou wilt clothe with shame, but upon Himself shall the crown flourish. We love this Name beyond all others; in this Name we ourselves are named. Christ is before all things and above all things, and by Him all things consist, and His blood cleanseth from all sin. We understand not the mystery, we receive the blessing; we cannot analyse the light, we rejoice in its infinite smile and love. We cannot understand Thee, but we can feel Thy nearness and respond to Thy grace. Lift us up out of all that is little and narrow and unworthy, and inspire us with the desire to know Thee through Thy Son more perfectly, and to serve Thee with more constant fidelity. *Amen.*

LVIII.]

[Scripture Reading: I JOHN iii. 1-12.]

THE LORD be gracious unto us for His dear Son's sake. Our best desires are our assurance that we have not been cast off by our Father. Because we pray, we know that we truly live. Once the earth satisfied us, but by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we now seek a country out of sight, a city in the skies. We are strangers and pilgrims here, rejoicing in many a passing beauty as we move on our solemn journey, yet earnestly desiring the eternal home far beyond the shadow of death. Whilst we are here we would be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, tender in heart, mighty in meekness, unconquerable in patience, and thus would be like our Master. May we bear His image as we bear His Name, and breathe His Holy Spirit in all the action and purpose of life. We pray for clearer insight into the very heart and mind of the Son of God. Our sight is dim, our knowledge is pained by its own ignorance, verily our eyes are thickly veiled. Lord, have mercy on us, and give us the larger, clearer vision. Thou hast always been going before us, or coming behind us with bread and water and comfort, now we desire the truer and fuller blessing of pureness of heart, and largeness of understanding. Make us loyal to the Cross and Crown of Jesus Christ. May we have no king but Jesus. May we seek no Saviour but Jesus. May we trust no refuge but Jesus. O Thou mighty Saviour of the world, fill us with Thy love.

*"O Jesus, King most wonderful!
Thou Conqueror renowned!
Thou sweetness most ineffable!
In whom all joys are found!*

*"When once Thou visitest the heart,
Then truth begins to shine;
Then earthly vanities depart;
Then wakens love divine.*

*"Thee may our tongues for ever bless;
Thee may we love alone;
And ever in our lives express
The image of Thine own.*

*"Grant me, while here on earth I stay,
Thy love to feel and know;
And when from hence I pass away,
To me Thy glory show."*

Amen.

LIX.]

[*Scripture Reading* : JAMES iv. 8-17.]

ALMIGHTY AND GRACIOUS FATHER, we would draw nigh unto Thee that Thou mayest draw nigh unto us. We come by the way of the Cross and plead the Name of Thy dear Son. We have heard the voice which says, Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Lord, we seek Thee now, and ask Thee to come to our house this day. Without Thee the house is dark and empty ; but with Thee it is full of light, and in it there is bread enough and to spare. We pray Thee to come to this house, and to the houses round about ; come to the feast when it is spread, and to the room where weakness suffers and dies ; to the nursery where little children play, and to the work-room where servants do their daily work. Omit no one from Thy blessing ; let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, alike enjoy the sunshine of Thy love. In winter we shall find summer if Thou wilt abide with us ; poverty shall then be wealth, and suffering shall be a means of grace. Our days are very few, and we may not reckon upon their continuance. Our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle. As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field so he flourisheth. May we remember this and make the best of our little time, loving one another and helping one another, and always growing in the stature and beauty of Christ. God's Holy Spirit be with us all. Give us wisdom in time of need, and give us help when all other helpers fail. At eventide let there be light, and take away the bitterness of death.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us evermore.
Amen.

LX.]

[*Scripture Reading:* MARK xiv. 3-9.]

FATHER of us all, Eternal Comforter, Thy word is sure; Thy promise can never fail. Strength of our own we have none. In our souls there is no answer to the cruel tempter. Our answer is in Christ; our armour is the armour of God. Thou knowest how weak we are, and how easily we yield to the voice that lures us into forbidden places. When we follow the tempter Thou dost smite us in judgment yet in mercy; not to destroy, but to save our souls is the purpose of all our chastisements. That we are this day the living to praise Thee is the miracle of Thy love. Glory and praise be unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ for the protection of our life, and the continuance of every ministry that nourishes and trains our soul. For the repose and security of the night we bless the Lord. Help every good man who this day shall fight for God. Give every soldier of the Cross foresight, courage, absolute and glowing confidence in the protection of God and the blessed issue of every holy war.

The Lord forgive us; the Lord direct us; the Lord forsake not the work of His own hands. Glory and honour, majesty and dominion, be unto Him who died upon the Cross, and who rose again to complete in intercession what He began in condescension and agony. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, the fellowship and comfort of the Holy Ghost be with all brave men, making them braver; with all fearful spirits, reviving their courage; with all sick and dying men, giving them assurance of immortality. Into Thy hand we commend our spirits. Now that we have spoken with the Lord, we go forth without fear to the work of the passing day. Lord, take us each by the hand. "Jesus, still lead on." *Amen.*

LXI.]

[Scripture Reading: PHILIPPIANS iii. 7-14.]

THOU who art the God of the families of the earth, we come unto Thee as unto a spring of living water, knowing that through our Lord Jesus Christ our prayers shall be heard and answered. All our springs are in Thee. Thou hast the upper and the nether spring, and the former and the latter rain are Thine. Lord, lead us to living fountains of water. In days that are gone Thou hast found for us pools in the dry land. When the poor and the needy sought water and there was none; when their tongue failed them for thirst, Thou the Lord didst cause the rocks to leap forth in streams, and the burning sand to be as a lake in a summer garden. Who can tell the miracles of Thy love? Who can reckon up the total goodness of God? Thou dost live to give. Thou dost give Thyself. Our Saviour tells us that He is Thy gift. Thou didst deliver Him up for us all. Give us this day our daily bread. Give us wisdom profitable to direct. Give us a thankful spirit. Take away the spirit of ingratitude and selfishness, and fill us with the benevolence and tenderness of Christ. Thankfulness doubles all Thy gifts. A grateful heart finds room for God. Hear each of us saying, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. We would be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. We would take the shield and buckler which Thou hast provided, and arm ourselves with the sword of the Spirit. Teach us that every battle may become a conquest, and that every trial is intended to refine and enrich our life. Fill our minds with the holiest thoughts lest the enemy take us unawares and work ruin in our hearts. Blessed Saviour, infinite in power and infinite in grace, take charge of us and make us meet for heavenly places. *Amen.*

LXII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM cxlvi.]

MOST MERCIFUL FATHER, our hearts are filled with thankfulness when we think of all Thy love. During the night Thou hast kept us in peace, and this morning is as a new blessing. What shall we render unto the Lord for all His goodness? For Thy dear Son's sake, at whose Cross we bow, we pray Thee to give us tenderness of heart, that we truly and deeply feel Thy lovingkindness. All will be well if Jesus will walk with us through all the road of life. Lord, abide with us. Bless our bread, and it will do us good. Watch our home, and it shall be filled with peace. Prosper our counsels, and they shall bear good fruit. Let some sure blessing come upon each of us. Turn none away from the bounty of Thy love. Mercifully rule our hearts and fill them with Thy Holy Spirit. We will not let Thee go until Thou dost bless us. Except Thy presence go with us, take us not forth to the duties or the dangers of the day. But if Thou wilt go with us we shall not fear what man can do unto us, nor will we shrink from the hardest task. For Christ's sake, in whose great Name alone we pray, pardon our sin, strengthen our best desires, and satisfy us abundantly with Thy goodness.

Grace, mercy, and peace be the blessing of the world this day.

*"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour Divine:
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away;
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine.*

*"When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Saviour, then, in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above—
A ransomed soul."*

Amen.

LXIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: HEBREWS iv. 1-8.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou art our life and our joy. We will bless Thee for all Thy tender mercy and Thy lovingkindness. Thy grace be multiplied unto us, Thou living, loving, brooding Father: where sin abounds Thy grace doth much more abound, as where the lingering shadow is in the daytime, behold Thy sun doth chase it away with infinite ease as with the scorn of ineffable power. Oh do Thou come to us in the tenderness of Thy grace, in the fulness of Thy saving strength, and mightily redeem and deliver us from every fear and trouble and from every shadow that would darken into despair.

We come with our prayers, and our cries of want, because of the authority and encouragement of Jesus Christ. He has opened a door that is very wide, He has uttered welcomes broader than our necessity, and He has offered to us the hospitality of God, whereby our hunger and our thirst may be for ever appeased, and He has given unto us Thy rest, which is an infinite calm. We behold His Cross and are glad: we see the tree of sacrifice in all its winter bareness, but we behold, by the eyes which Thou hast opened in our soul, the whole spring-tide of heaven coming into its branches, causing its leaves to come forth, which shall be for the healing of the nations, and as we behold this manifestation of life out of death, power out of weakness, redemption out of sacrifice, our gladness is greater than our sorrow.

Hear our prayer for others: for the pilgrims within sight of the end; for the little child that calls forth the love of the whole house; for the sick, the weary, and the disappointed. God's will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. May we go forth to duty, to suffering, to every form of discipline, with brave hearts, because of this tarrying at the Cross. *Amen.*

LXIV.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM XCV.]

*"God is love: His mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bliss He wakes, and woe He lightens;
God is wisdom, God is love.*

*"Chance and change are busy ever;
Man decays and ages mope;
But His mercy waneth never;
God is wisdom, God is love."*

ALMMIGHTY GOD, who can search Thine understanding, or follow out to perfectness the comprehension of Thy Name? We adore, we pray, we fall down and worship, and will not look up until Thou dost bid us do so; then shall we see the King in His beauty and marvel at the loveliness of His face.

We pray for the spirit of love, that we may better know the truth and better understand the Cross. Show us, Father, that all Thy way is ordered in love, and that what now appears to be otherwise will but more fully show Thy tenderness in the day of revelation. Give us quietness of soul under all change, and soothe us with the assurance that Thou doest all things well. Under Thy banner do we go forth in the morning, and under Thy blessing do we return in the evening. How good is the Lord! All day long we would say, God is love: God is light: God is our tender Father. Thus shall the day hear our song, and the night shall be made glad by our offering of praise. Day and night we are Thine. The darkness and the light are both alike unto Thee. In Christ we have no fear. In Him we would dwell as in a sanctuary. The Lord's will be done. God's Name be magnified.

The Lord hide not Himself from our petition. Save now, we beseech Thee, O Lord. Save us, for Thy mercy's sake. Oh that Thou wouldest bless us indeed, that Thy Spirit might be with us, that Thou wouldest keep us from evil, that it may not grieve us. Hear us, when with our hearts we say, *Amen*.

LXV.]

[*Scripture Reading:* I CORINTHIANS XV. 50-58.]

BLESSED BE THE LORD for our life, our reason, and all the sacred joys of home. Our dwelling-place is the Lord's sanctuary, for here we have built an altar unto His worship, and here we have openly and lovingly called upon His Name. Blessed be the hand that holds us, and blessed be the Spirit that daily seeks our good, yea, blessed evermore be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Restraining praise we grow cold and hard, for our hearts are then turned away from the light and our thoughts no longer lay hold mightily upon God. We will not be silent as we look upon the bounty of the Lord. Our house is His; our bread and water; our mutual trust and love; our faculties of mind and body; all are God's gift, all are God's token and seal. We are not our own. We are bought with a price; with a price beyond all price, with the precious blood of the Son of God. What manner of persons ought we then to be! How holy in thought, how resolute in courage, how excellent in charity. Lord God the Holy Ghost, work in us all the beauty of Christ and clothe us with His loveliness. Then on earth we shall begin our heaven.

To love the dear Lord more and more, and to enjoy the clearer sunshine of His presence, is our heart's desire, breathed at the Cross of Christ, and because God Himself gave us this prayer He will not keep back His answer of peace. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all, and not with us only, but with all our friends, with old men and little children, with the poor and the sad, with the sick and the dying, yea, with all who lift their eyes to the eternal hills. *Amen.*

LXVI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: HEBREWS ii. 1-9.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we come to Thee in the Name of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, and not ours only but the Saviour of the whole world, who by His precious blood answered all the accusation of Thy law. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life, and there is none other, and we now accept Him as Thy gift, the very utterance and expression of Thine own infinite love. What wonders Thou hast wrought for us! Truly Thou hast maintained us from the first breath until now: once we were nearly gone, our feet had well-nigh slipped, and we had been numbered with the dead, yea, again and again, and sevenfold times: yet Thou hast brought us back from the brink of the grave and set our feet in a large place. Now and again, and once more, the black cloud of despair has threatened to fall upon us in all the compass of its darkness, and behold Thou hast divided it with a beam of light, Thou hast pierced it with sunbeams, and the light of God's love has been greater than the gloom of all temptation. Thou hast not done these things that Thou mightest in the end destroy us: if Thou hadst meant our destruction Thou hadst wrought it long ago. Thou art not cruel; Thou dost not cause us to linger in pain, that at last we may simply die; nor dost Thou give us tokens of love, gleamings of light, revelations of truth, that at the end we may go down into the pit of darkness, and forget and be forgotten: this is not our Father's way. We will accept Thy mercies as promises. We will say, These are but proofs and pledges of what has yet to come: it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but every high impulse, every noble motive, every pure enjoyment shall tell us of the completeness of heaven and the blessedness of immortality.

Amen.

LXVII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM cxix. 33-40.]

ALmighty FATHER, for the word of Thy truth we bless Thee. It is a light above the brightness of the sun. We know that the life of the body is as the grass, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven; but in our spirit Thou hast made us like Thyself, that we may live with Thee evermore. We would live upon Thy word as upon bread sent down from heaven. Lord, evermore give us this bread. Thy Son our Saviour is the Bread of Life. This day we would see Christ as we have never seen Him before, and would give Him our whole heart in love and in service. O Thou mighty Saviour of the world, fill us with the tenderness and holiness of Thine own love.

Regard our house with favour, and show each of us what is best to be done, so as to please Thee most, day by day. Not our will, but Thine, be done. Take away from our hearts the spirit of care, and grant unto us the spirit of trust. Thou doest all things well. We will cast all our care upon Thee, for Thou carest for us. Thou wilt find water in the desert, and the rocks shall be full of fruit. Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet we will rejoice in the Lord, we will joy in the God of our salvation. Lord, increase our faith. In the darkness, may our faith be brightest. In the outward winter, may we feel summer-warmth in the soul.

In the Name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world, we go forth to the duty of another day with hope and thankfulness. May the grace of our infinite Saviour make us wise and strong. *Amen.*

LXVIII.]

[Scripture Reading : JOHN i. 15-28.]

GOD be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us. This is the desire of our heart, created in us by God the Holy Ghost; yea, this is the miracle of the Cross, the very victory of Christ. May we know that though in the body we are dying creatures, yet in Christ Jesus the Saviour we are inheritors of eternal life. Save us, O Lord most high, from looking at ourselves and our littleness, and cause us to look upon the unsearchable riches of Christ our Lord. In Him we have all things. He is the first and the last, the crown and the glory of the universe. We pray to see so much of Thy way in the affairs of men as to lead us to rest in Thee and wait patiently for all fulness of revelation. What we have seen is a proof of Thy tender love. Amid all disorder Thou art working out a purpose of wisdom and holiness. The end is not yet. Save us from judging anything before the time. Give us the spirit of perfect trust. Qualify us to do our duty, to bear the load of life, to suffer hopefully, and even thankfully, that we may in all things magnify the Lord.

Gracious Father, hear us at the Cross. We know Thine answer is sure. We wait for it. Such waiting is rest. Hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and when Thou hearest, Lord, forgive. We pray now and ever in our Saviour's mighty and eternal Name.

To God, the only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever.

*"May the grace of Christ our Saviour,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour,
Rest upon us from above!"*

*"Thus may we abide in union
With each other and the Lord;
And possess in sweet communion
Joys which earth cannot afford."*

Amen.

LXIX.]

[*Scripture Reading*: ISAIAH xii.]

THOU Shepherd of Israel, take care of us; Thou Father-Mother, uphold us; Thou Almighty One, tend us like a flock. We stain every day by some sin, not always planned, but sometimes as a great surprise we are startled into sin; we are suddenly thrown down by a wind we had not reckoned upon. We cannot tell where things are, where forces play, where ministries operate; we know nothing as we ought to know it, but we would come to Him who has all wisdom and would rest in His perfectness.

Look upon our life with tears in Thine eyes; pity us, and we shall have hope; lift not up Thine arm against us, or our doom is sealed. Thy compassions, Lord, are a host; Thy lovingkindnesses make a shore around the sea of life. Oh that we might believe this, really, deeply, vitally; then we should sing in the night-time, and the desert would be as a garden of God. Pity us in our littlenesses and mistakes; lay not these to our charge as sins, for then verily we should be dumb before Thee, and should be burned with the fire of shame.

Thou hast made reply to our sin; Thou hast answered from the Cross. We have heard Thy voice in Thy Son: He has spoken to us of Thy love: He has told us that Thou didst so love the world as to give Thine only begotten Son to live and die for it. Herein is love, not that we loved Thee, but that Thou didst love us, and send Thy Son to be the Saviour of the world. Now and again we see the brightness of His glory, and if for a moment it blind our eyes, it is that it may the more perfectly illumine our souls. Let that great Light shine upon us, and there shall be no night in our life, but the darkness shall be as the noonday.

“Lead, kindly Light”; go before us, Spirit of Peace; make us quiet with Thine own security. *Amen.*

LXX.]

[*Scripture Reading* : I CORINTHIANS XV. 12-24.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we bless Thee that Thou hast so made us that we cannot live without Thee, if we would live our full life and satisfy our deepest love. We have heard of Thee by many names, because Thy revelations are many, and Thy claims are without number. Art Thou not known to us as the Everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth? Have we not sung of Thee as Shield and Defender and Ancient of days? Adapt Thy strength to us, Lord, lest we be overpowered; shade the light lest we be blinded by its glory. We see everywhere the deep quiet ministry of love: in the dawn, in the eventide, in the spring-time, in the solemn harvest: all nature tells of the patience and care of Thy husbandry. Yet even this is not enough. Still we thirst. Is there not some other fountain, some deeper spring? We find what we need in Christ alone. He, too, has many names, for His offices are many, and His gifts are more in number than the sand upon the seashore. We call Him Master and Lord; Son of man and Son of God; a Root out of a dry ground and the Flower of Jesse; the Eternal Son and the Brother born for adversity. But only at the Cross do we see all the beauty. Only the blood of His heart can tell all the gospel of His love.

Lord, forgive our sin; cleanse us, and we shall be clean. We would be wholly Thine. May Jesus Christ Thy Son reign in our hearts. Blessed are they to whom He breaks bread. Holy is the house in which He dwells. Safe is the life which trusts itself to Christ. The Lord be mindful of us in the dark and cloudy day. The Lord feed our lamp with oil. Lord, into Thy hands we commend our spirits. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem so be round our tempted souls. *Amen.*

LXXI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: GALATIANS iii. 21-29.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, there is no future with Thee ; Thou seest all things now and evermore. Thou inhabitest eternity. Thou art everywhere, in every star, and in every leaf. The great cannot contain Thee, and the small is not too humble a place for Thy dwelling. We leave ourselves, therefore, in Thy hands. Thou doest all things well. We would fall into Thine arms, and rest there. Thou Hearer of prayer, we pray for our loved ones everywhere, for the little children at school, for the sailor on the sea, for the wanderer in the wilderness, for the poor and the sick, for those who are ready to die in Christ, and therefore are ready to live. Thou dost accept the upward look as a great prayer ; Thou dost multiply the sighing of the soul into a boundless utterance of desire. We would set no bound to our prayer, when there are no bounds to Thy mercy.

We beseech Thee, merciful Father, to give us such realisation of Thy presence in our life as shall save us from distrust, as shall deliver us from unbelief, and as shall give us steadiness of mind, constancy of heart, and determination of will, in all that pertains to our lot. If Thou dost chastise, it is that Thou mayest draw us more closely to Thyself. If Thou dost impoverish us, it is that Thou mayest enrich us with riches which no thief can take away. Help us to believe these things, and we shall be strong. Help us, by all the events of providence, to grow in all spiritual manliness and strength. Keep us lowly in heart, meek in spirit, having no confidence in ourselves, but having perfect trust in God. So shall our way be opened before us, and men shall be given to know that the God whom we serve is ever at our right hand. The Lord hear us, and pardon our offences ; Christ, pity us ; Holy Spirit, dwell in us. *Amen.*

LXXII.]

[Scripture Reading : JOHN vi. 26-34.]

*"O give thanks to nature's King,
Who made every breathing thing :
His, our warm and sentient frame,
His, the mind's immortal flame ;
O, how close the ties that bind
Spirits to the Eternal Mind !*

*"O give thanks with heart and lip,
For we are His workmanship,
And all creatures are His care :
Not a bird that cleaves the air
Falls unnoticed ; but who can
Speak the Father's love to man ?"*

FATHER OF ALL, Thou hast set Thy seal upon every tree in the forest, and crowded every leaf with wondrous life. Before we look up to be made afraid, we will look down to be comforted. Every insect is a guest at Thy table. The browsing cattle are Thine. Thine are all the birds that fly in the open firmament, and every fish in the sea holds its life as Thy gift. Advancing on our upward way we find that on man Thou hast set the crown of dominion, and hast taught the children of men to find their truest dignity in bowing humbly before the glory of Thy throne. For men Thou didst set up the mystery of the Cross. Thou didst die for men. Teach us what it is to die, lest we dishonour Thee by our ignorance and unbelief. We have thought of death in one way only, and have not known that it is part of the mystery of life. As surely as time runs through the darkness of night as well as through the brightness of day, so life embraces death, and accounts it but a momentary eclipse. Lord, help us to see and to feel that Thou art not stopped in Thy loving purpose by a shadow called the grave, but that the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee. Thy Cross, O Christ, begins the new creation. Thou art the Mother of the new humanity.

O Saviour, be our all in all, then in our souls there shall be neither cry of want, nor shudder of fear : keep us in Thine own hand. Save us from the power of the enemy, and bring us finally to the river clear as crystal, and to the fountain of living waters. *Amen.*

LXXIII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : LUKE XX. 1-18.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou hast always been yearning for Thy children, calling out for them as those cry who have lost their loved ones in the dark : last of all Thou didst send Thy Son also. The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners. The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men. We bless Thee for all Gospel words. We speak harshly to one another, we meet day by day incidents that trouble us with great distress : the world is cold, and we are lonely in the wilderness—speak Thou to us, and find for us pools of water in the desert places. We leave ourselves wholly in Thy hand. Thou knowest the way into our life ; we do not say, By this way, or by that, do Thou come ; but our prayer to God is that He would dwell with us and reign over us and make us the temples of His presence.

We lovingly commend each other to Thy Fatherly care. Shower a blessing upon us. What each requires most Thou knowest. Read the desires of the heart, and acquaint Thyself with the need too deep to be told in words. The tempter is waiting for us ; do Thou destroy his power and turn his purpose to confusion. The world will seek the homage of our heart ; may it find the heart overflowing with Thy love. Let Thy word dwell in us richly. May every power we have be sanctified unto the Lord. We have spoken thus to our Father, and our souls await His answer. Yet we need not wait, for already we know that our prayer is heard. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Come with us, O risen Saviour, and the wilderness shall blossom as the rose. *Amen.*

LXXIV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : LUKE XV. 11-24.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou dost receive Thy children every day, yea, in the night-time dost Thou open the door of Thy house to let Thy wanderers in. We are all Thine, though we have spoken against Thee : we bear Thine image, though our hand has been thrust into Thy face : we are still Thy children, though we have ruined every faculty, and wasted our inheritance, and are no more worthy to be called Thy sons. So great is Thy love, so all-forgiving is Thy Spirit : we come to Thee now without defence or excuse, assured by Thy Gospel that we shall be received even with joyfulness.

We have done wickedly : we bring back no commandment to Thy throne that we have kept : we dare not stand upon our virtue and innocence, and ask for Thine inquiry. We are evil, we have done evil, and we are witnesses against ourselves, and the day is too short to hear the testimony of our self-accusation. But great is the mercy of the Lord, and full is His everlasting love, and ready is His reply, seeing that we come in the appointed way, and breathe our penitential prayer at the foot of the Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We speak in His sweet, great Name, the Name to sinners dear, a rock in which they hide, a sanctuary of delight, and a pledge of power.

The Lord visit us according to the depth and breadth of our painful necessity. What each heart needs Thou knowest ; the prayer we dare not speak Thou hearest ; the gentlest knocking is heard at Thy door. When we seek may we find. Thou knowest what we would be, what we would have, and what we would do, and we lay this before Thee, in uttered words or silent desire, and we would say at last, having completed the tale of our want, and the prayer of our ignorance, Nevertheless, not our will, but Thine, be done. *Amen.*

LXXV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : ISAIAH liii.]

ALmighty GOD, we rejoice to know that there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus; we come therefore to Thee, through Him alone: in Him is our worthiness, in Him is our strength, and if we are dumb before Thee, it is that He Himself may pray for us.

We thank Thee that we have an interest in the affairs of Thy kingdom. Time doth not charm us, and all the earth with its fulness and all the sea with its music cannot content us. We declare plainly that we seek a country: our eyes are lifted up, and we seek a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Thou hast stirred us by a Divine ambition, Thou art moving us by heavenly impulses, the unrest which disturbs our heart is itself a blessing, calling upon us to arise and work and serve and wait and suffer until the end which is full of light shall come.

Wherein we have done wrong in Thy sight do Thou now exercise Thy mercy, that the miracle of Thy forgiveness may exceed the marvel of our guilt. Thou hast an answer to us in Christ Jesus: He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. Lo, this is Thy gospel to our heart when it smites itself with accusation, and to our conscience when it rises threateningly and demands our life. Help us to find rest in Christ, refuge in the Cross, and peace in the holy blood—then let Thy word dwell in us richly as a new life and a new light, the very glory of heaven, the very peace of God. So shall we have an answer to every tempter, a refuge in the time of every tempest, and our peace shall be complete.

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

LXXVI.]

[*Scripture Reading: ISAIAH XXV. 1-9.*]

ALMIGHTY GOD, our hearts know Thee, and in their deepest love is Thy Name set as their one jewel and treasure. We cannot understand Thee, but we can love Thee; Thou dost not come into our intelligence, or sit down in our understanding; Thou dost knock at the door of our heart, and into its love Thou dost come with all readiness, bringing with Thee all heaven.

Thy care of us has been very tender; Thou hast dried our tears with a soft hand; Thou hast spoken to our hearts in a voice that did not smite them as with thunder, but that fell with the graciousness of the early and the latter rain. Thou hast been mindful of our weakness; wherein Thou hast brought Thine omnipotence to bear upon our feebleness, Thou hast repeated the greatest of Thy miracles.

Hear us whilst we confess our sin; we mourn our iniquity. Let Thy forgiveness, through Jesus Christ, our one Priest and only Saviour, be greater than all our guilt. When we sin most we most need Him, for He is the Saviour of the world, and the Redeemer of those who are in bondage. Bring us all around His cross, and high above all the writing of those who slew Him, may we see the superscription traced by Thine own hand: The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

We put ourselves into Thy hands for guidance, direction, sustenance, and all things needful. We shall die to-morrow, but to die is to live, if so be that we die in the Lord. Help us to use our time well: may no talent be wrapped up and laid aside; may we be living at every point of our character; yea, may there be no death in us at all; even now we may lay hold upon our immortality, and bring to bear upon the things of the dying day the power of an endless life. *Amen.*

LXXVII.]

[Scripture Reading: ISAIAH li. 7-16.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou who inhabitest eternity, what are we that Thou art mindful of us? We are filled with self-contempt: we look upon our days, and they are few; upon our strength, and it is consumed before the moth; yet are we great in Thy sight because of Thy love. Thou art seeking something in us which we have not found in ourselves; Thou art seeking Thine own image and likeness, that it may be restored and perfected and glorified. It is God that worketh in us. This we feel by many an impulse, by many a high desire, by many a prayer that cannot find words for its fit expression. Continue Thy ministry in our hearts; lead us to all that is solid, virtuous, and everlasting. May we make our habitation in heaven; may we have a house not made with hands: then shall all our groaning in this tabernacle be but for a night-time, a passing sigh mingling with the wind, forgotten in the storm; and our hearts shall steadfastly fix their vision upon the eternal place, the infinite liberty, the house of our Father standing evermore on high. Whilst we are here, enable us to bear the frets and vexations, the chafings and disappointments of life like sons of God whose vision, being filled by eternity, can take but brief note of time. Enable us to show what grace can do in sustaining the heart amidst storm and wreck and ruin and long night-seasons of sorrow and loneliness. Magnify Thy grace in us, we beseech Thee; may it be more than sufficient to sustain us under every burden, and in the endurance of every pain.

Undertake for us in all conflict, difficulty, poverty, sleeplessness, fear, and danger of every name and kind; and lead our life as Thou wilt, day by day, for surely, by way of the Cross, Thou wilt lead the obedient into heaven. We rest in Jesus; we throw our arms around the Cross, and whilst we embrace it do Thou grant unto us pardon and peace. *Amen.*

LXXVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM civ. 24-35.]

THOU dost count our steps, O Lord ; our downsit-
ting and our uprising are not too mean to be noticed in
heaven ; Thou dost beset us behind and before, and lay
Thine hand upon us ; Thou dost send Thine angels to watch
our life, and to bless us with many benedictions. Thou hast
filled our cup, Thou hast made our bed, Thou hast kept our
dwelling-place, Thou hast been round about us as a defence.

Pity us in our sorrows and distresses ; do not mock us in
our follies ; do not discourage us with bitter taunting from
heaven when our own souls misgive us ; but with all
gentleness and comfortableness do Thou encourage us once
more to do that which is right, and to attempt that which is
holy, and with every attempt do Thou give us increase of
strength. Set up Thy kingdom within our hearts, and it
shall absorb all other masteries, and rule us with infinite
and gracious dominion. Save us from the anxiety that is
unchristian, from the care that is the result of unbelief,
and that becomes an offence against Thy dignity and love.
Help us to see the best of one another, teach us to read
each other's life in the light of Divine hope and redeeming
love ; fill our hearts with the very love of Christ, and may we
live under the shadow of the Cross.

The Lord's blessing go beyond us : to the sick chamber,
where there is danger, where there is pain, where death has
almost taken possession ; to the prison, where the prisoner
languishes in remorse ; to the sea, where men are in trouble
and great fear ; to the field, where the soldier's life is one keen
anxiety ; yea, let Thy blessing go the whole earth round,
omitting none from its baptism of light, and let the earth
feel that it is still in God's hand, yea, in God's heart, the
earth that has borne the Cross, and shall one day see the
throne of the Saviour's glory. *Amen.*

LXXIX.]

[*Scripture Reading*: HEBREWS V.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, all souls are Thine; there is an appointed time to men upon the earth, and Thou dost keep the record in heaven: not a sparrow falleth to the ground without Thee, how much less we who are made in Thine image and likeness, breathing Thy breath, and looking up to Thee, and groping after Thee in many an aspiration and many a secret desire and longing of the heart? Help us, we beseech Thee; for man faileth from off the face of the earth, there is no abiding in his life; the life of man is here and gone, and is as the grass which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven. Thou only remainest, Thou alone art without change, Thou art the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Help us to rest in Thy goodness, to find in Thy power a secure sanctuary; hide us in the Rock of Ages.

We bless Thee for all Thy tender care; Thy patience hath no time: truly Thou art longsuffering, and Thy mercy endureth for ever. Continue Thy light above the way we travel, send Thine angel with us, and the night shall be as the day, and the sun shall be filled with sevenfold light. Meet us when we enter the wilderness, and show us all through its barren rocks and sands, and bring us into the great and glad city at last. Come to the souls that are bowed down because of the heavy burden, and lift the weight that is crushing the complaining life. Thou knowest what most we need; we would leave our necessity as our unspoken prayer: not what we want in our ignorance, but what we really require for our spiritual nourishment and discipline and perfecting, do Thou in Thy great mercy give us this day from heaven. Our riches are not here, they are in Thy right hand; our bread is not grown in the earth, it is stored for us in Thy sky. Father of all things, grant unto us such satisfactions as we really need, and the gladness which cannot die. *Amen.*

LXXX.]

[*Scripture Reading*: I JOHN iii. 1-10.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, help us by Thy blessed Spirit to know how true it is that those who love the Saviour must reveal His beauty to the world, and that by their loveliness they must draw men to Christ. When we see our Lord, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; yet even now though we see Him not in open vision, our hearts may behold His glory, and our lives may show forth His light. Thou knowest the difficulties under which our lives are spent, and which make prayer itself almost impossible; Thou knowest the weakness and selfishness of the body, and the clamour of every passion that drowns the sighing of the wounded spirit; and because Thou knowest us altogether, we have hope in Thy mercy. Our souls go out after the living God with strong crying and tears, and cannot rest but in the heart that accepted and glorified the Cross.

BLESSED FATHER, we would know the mystery of living wholly in Thee, and so living in the world as to live apart from it. Even this miracle lies within the scope of Thine almightiness. We can do all things by the power of Christ. The school in which we begin our education is very small, yet how boundless may be its influence! The nest of the bird is small, but who can measure the firmament in which it flies! May we look not at the smallness of the beginning, but at the possibilities of inextinguishable life. To this end we pray to be filled with the Spirit of Christ, and to be bowed down in lowliest homage before His Cross. The blossom of heaven is in the seed of faith. All music begins in prayer. Teach us, Lord, that the battle is itself the victory, if so be we are one in heart with Christ. For every holy thought we bless Thee, as we bless Thee for sunshine in winter. Lord, make us more and more like the Saviour of the world. *Amen.*

LXXXI.]

[*Scripture Reading* : JOHN viii. 45-59.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thy praise shall never cease ; from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same men shall call Thee blessed, for Thou art the God of salvation, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We lift up our song to Thee, for Thy mercy endureth for ever. Both Thy hands are stretched out in fatherly gift and blessing ; we have nothing that we have not received ; even our souls are not our own, they are redeemed with blood ; we belong to Christ, we have been taken at the point of the spear, we are prisoners of war. We bless Thee for this captivity ; this is liberty, this is the joyous freedom of obedience. Once we sought to be our own, and to handle our own life, and to do our own work in our own way, but Thou didst humble our vanity and stain the pride of our glory, and through the wilderness of ruin Thou hast brought us to the garden of beauty and peace. This is the way of Thy wisdom, which no man can find out unto perfection. Thou wilt break us down before we can be built up ; Thou wilt utterly root out every old thing, every old trust and superstition and all self-idolatry, and when Thou hast emptied us thus, and made us really poor, Thou wilt begin to make us truly rich. We would accept the discipline of God ; it is hard, but it is merciful in the end : how difficult to bear sometimes ; how sharp the sword, how terrible the storm, how complete the poverty ; and yet all this is part of something else, part of a great thought of love, and made necessary by this lingering vanity, this ever-abiding self-confidence. Thou wilt bring us to prostration ; when we are laid down before Thee in utterest helplessness, having no breath or heart to say more than, God be merciful unto me a sinner ; then Thou wilt give us lifting up of soul, steadfastness and courage and hope, and the very beginning of heaven. *Amen.*

LXXXII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: HEBREWS vi. 1-10.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, whilst the heavens are declaring Thy glory, may we not be silent, but may our testimony be clearer than theirs, inasmuch as we have received the infinite wonders of redemption. We bless Thee for all things that remind us of Thy power; we thank Thee for all the evidences of Thy grace. Thou didst seek us when we were lost. Thou didst bring us out of the dense gloom that had gathered around our life. Thou dost love mankind: Thou didst so love the world as to give Thine only begotten Son to live, to die, to rise again, and in mighty prayer to plead the human cause. He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. Jesus Christ was slain for us from before the foundation of the world. We take up an earlier song than is sung by all the shining host of the spacious firmament. May we sing our song in our life as well as with our lips; may we give ourselves, a living sacrifice, unto God, which is our reasonable service.

We thank Thee for all hints that widen our own liberty, and that kindle our hope to a brighter blaze. We thank Thee for those moments of rapture and ecstasy in which we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Thou dost again and again inspire us with strength that mocks the fatal enemy, and extracts from him his sting. Enable us to live according to our privileges; may ours be a noble existence, heroic, patient, loving, like the Saviour's, whom we follow.

We come to Thee by the right way, we walk by the way of the Cross, we breathe the Name of Thy Son, we look hopefully to His sacrificial blood, for other hope we have none. We lay our hand upon the Priest and the Victim, and because of the ministry of Jesus Christ our Lord, in life, in death, in earth, in heaven, we say, God be merciful unto us, sinners. *Amen.*

LXXXIII.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN vi. 49-58.]

SPIRIT of the living God, grant unto us the power to sing Thy praise. Thy mercies call for new songs, and Thy love demands our thankfulness. Thy grace has made us rich. Thy word has made us strong. To our hearts Thou hast shown Thyself in many a tender vision. By the glowing of our hearts we know that we have been in close and living fellowship with Christ. How then can we restrain our gratitude, or be dumb in the presence of Thy gracious miracles? Lord, open our lips, and our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

Thou hast done all things well. This we have not always known, for many a cloud has darkened above our trembling life. We know it now, and with our hearts we say, Thou hast done all things well. We see Thy well-doing in the fair creation, in the loveliness of flowers, and the glory of suns; we see it now in pain and loss, in poverty and weakness, in disappointment and desolation: in our tears and sadness and bewilderment, we say: Thou hast done all things well. It is Thyself that is good, and therefore Thy doings are right. God is love. Thy rod is a branch of the tree of life, and Thy pruning-hook is but a form of Thy sceptre. We will fear no evil. Here the light is often dim, and here the mask often hides the living face, and here the shadows stop our progress; but if we may see light in Thy light we shall not stumble, neither shall we be afraid. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Lord of glory, grant unto us the light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

*" Lord of mercy and of might,
Of mankind the life and light,
Maker, Teacher, Infinite:
Jesus, hear and save!*

*" Soon to come to earth again,
Judge of angels and of men;
Hear us now, and hear us then:
Jesus, hear and save!"*

Amen.

LXXXIV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : MATTHEW X. 1-15.]

ALMIGHTY FATHER, take from us the fear that we are at a great distance from God, and destroy our unbelief in Thy nearness, and give us to feel that Thou art at our right hand that we may not be moved, yea, that Thou art stooping over us that Thou mayest hear the beating of our heart. Thou wilt not come to us in the terribleness of Thy majesty, but in the tenderness of Thy mercy, so that the bruised reed shall not be broken, the smoking flax shall not be quenched, the broken heart shall be reconstructed by the grace and pity and tenderness of God. May we live our prayers; may our daily life be a daily explanation of our faith and hope in Christ. Save us from despair, guard us from temptation, lead us by a way that we know not, and when there is a lion in our path do Thou go before us lest our life be suddenly devoured. Let the light of heaven's noonday shine upon all the road, that we may see clearly how to go, and may we accept the light not only as a blessing upon ourselves, but as an opportunity for doing good to others. In the morning be our song; at eventide be our rest; be at once our morning and evening Star, and may the morning and the evening alike be doors opening upon eternity, yea, upon heaven itself. Make this house a home; make the family a household of faith; may the strong minister to the weak; may the healthy grant unto the sick all aid and service and comfort; may the old be patient with the young, and the young be reverent to the old; yea, may a spirit of true Christian love bind all the household together in sacred unity. Keep our front door, and keep our hearthstone, and preserve our roof; yea, make every chamber a place of revelation of Thy glory and of Thy grace; then shall the house throughout be a sacred dwelling-place, the very sanctuary of God. *Amen.*

LXXXV.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM xxviii.]

FATHER OF OUR SPIRITS, in the morning we praise Thee for work to do, and in the evening we bless Thee for the work that has been done. Help us to look upon all honest work as the gift of God, meant to draw out and make strong our best life. Whilst we are doing our work do Thou stand near us and show us how to do it well. May we do everything for Christ's sake, and in everything may we have the smile of our Lord; then shall our life lead up to heaven, and on the road we shall have the joy of hope. We pray for the pure heart which sees God. Grant unto us the gift of Thy Holy Spirit, that our hearts may be renewed in holiness. Spirit of purity, make us pure with the very holiness of God. We would walk in light. We would walk as our Lord Himself walked. Whilst we are in the world we would not be of the world, but would be filled with the Spirit of Christ. May we prove the truth of our prayers by the goodness of our conduct, lest we be found liars before God.

Blessed Saviour, may we have the spirit of forgiveness ever abounding in our hearts; may we be patient, long-suffering, meek, and fruitful in all good works. Thou wilt not account our weakness a sin, for Thou knowest our frame, and our frailty is the work of Thine own hands. Our strength is in the Lord; our hope is in the Cross. Now we go forth to duty, hoping only in God.

*"Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I go,
My daily labour to pursue;
Thee, only Thee, resolved to know,
In all I think, or speak, or do.*

*"The task Thy wisdom hath assigned,
O let me cheerfully fulfil;
In all my works Thy presence find,
And prove Thy good and perfect will.*

*"Thee may I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes my inmost substance see;
And labour on at Thy command,
And offer all my works to Thee.*

*"For Thee delightfully employ
Whate'er Thy bounteous grace hath given,
And run my course with even joy,
And closely walk with Thee to heaven."*

Amen.

LXXXVI.]

[*Scripture Reading* : MARK ix. 2-10.]

WE seek the Lord because He first sought us. We were as sheep going astray : yea, we had turned our back upon the living One, and had gone forth into the land of death, in the vain hope that there we might find life. We daily seek the Lord because we daily need Him. Blessed be God, no man can find Him out unto perfection ; there is ever some new aspect of majesty to be discovered, some new token of mercy to be secured, some higher call to greater duty to be heard by the attentive heart. We do not come to Thee because we are driven, but because we are led ; not our hunger alone, but our love draws us toward Thee. Thou wilt satisfy our thirst with living water, and our love Thou wilt abundantly satisfy with new communications of grace.

Lord God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be with us all the day long, be with us also throughout the hours of darkness ; help us when the road is steep and wearisome, and when the wind is very cold do Thou shelter us by drawing still nearer to our life. We are sure that all things work together for good ; increase, therefore, our patience that we may wait for Thee with surer hopefulness.

Lord, deliver us from the snare of our own counsel, and the shallowness of our own wisdom. Pity our littlenesses and our infirmities ; as for our sin, whilst we confess it do Thou lead us to the mystery of the sacrifice of Christ. Set a light in our dwelling. Defend our habitation. Surround us as with watching angels. Lord Jesus, in the plentifulness of Thy great mercy, help us and save us, we humbly beseech Thee. What we pray for ourselves, we pray for others, that they may be bound up in the bundle of life, and that we all, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, may find an abundant entrance into Thy heavenly kingdom. *Amen.*

LXXXVII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: MATTHEW vi. 16-23.]

GIVER OF ALL GOOD, Thou knowest what we need. Our life is one continual want. We cannot sustain ourselves even for a moment. For life and breath and all things we depend upon the living God. Thou hast kept back no good thing from us. Not one word of Thy promise has failed. Thou knowest what things we have need of before we ask Thee, yet Thou dost encourage us to tell Thee all our pain and need, and open our mouth widely in supplication. We ask Thee for wisdom that we may walk uprightly and usefully all this day. We ask Thee for grace that we may bear the load patiently, and carry it as if it were the gift of God. We ask for the child-like heart that trusts and rejoices and makes the best of all life's brightness. We ask for the bread of life, the bread sent down from heaven; yea, Lord, hear us when we cry, Evermore give us this bread. We ask all these riches in the Name of our Lord and Saviour, for not only is He the medium of Thy grace, He is Himself the pledge that all good things shall be freely given unto us. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

The Lord's blessing be the light of our dwelling, and the Lord's Spirit be the Comforter and Sanctifier of our lives. Enlarge us in all nobleness of character, simplify our every motive, elevate the purposes of our life, and help us to leave a record which the Son of God will accept, and which the King Himself will largely reward. To do this is not in our own power, but, blessed be God, it is in the power of Christ and in the power of the Eternal Spirit, to whom we come with daily petition and with daily thanksgiving.

Glory and dominion and praise eternal be unto the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God. *Amen.*

LXXXVIII.]

[Scripture Reading: LUKE viii. 26-36.]

THY goodness, Father in heaven, is without beginning and without end. Thy mercy endureth for ever; Thy compassion cometh upon our life every morning, and Thy blessing rests upon our eyelids in sleep night by night. When we cannot see Thee Thou art still near; sometimes we can almost touch Thee. Thou dost vary Thy way of coming into our life: Thou dost come at the early dawn, or Thou dost tarry until the time of the evening star; at midnight there is a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! We rejoice that Thou wilt come in Thine own way, and now we know that Thy way is best. Sometimes Thou dost come along the road of affliction, with a rod in Thy hand to smite us because of sin; Thou dost also come through green pastures and by waters of comfort, that we may be led into open spaces, and permitted to enjoy the very fulness of Thy love. Lord, come as Thou wilt: may we be ready to obey the first sign; may we arise and fly after Thee with all the eagerness of love. We will say of the Lord that He hath led us by a way that we knew not: when the paths were difficult His presence made them easy; we forgot their ruggedness whilst the Lord whispered His love to our hearts, yea, the churchyard is a garden, and the place of graves has become a place of flowers. As a household we bless Thee. We praise Thee for the table loaded with benefits: for the security and joy of home. Hear us in every capacity in which we appear before Thee: as father, mother, child, servant, friend. Send upon us all a plentiful blessing. Give us the peace of God, the sweet contentment which rests in God's heart, a holy, triumphant joy that says, God's will be done.

*" My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home on life's rough way,
O teach me from my heart to say,
' Thy will be done ! ' "*

*" Let but my fainting heart be blest
With Thy sweet Spirit for its guest,
My God, to Thee I leave the rest:
' Thy will be done ! ' "*

Amen.

LXXXIX.]

[*Scripture Reading*: MATTHEW vi. 24-34.]

ALmighty GOD, the way of life is full of danger; on the right hand and on the left there are perils many and subtle. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, so we come to Thee for them; they are spiritual weapons; they must be made in heaven, and handed to us by our Father. Enable us to take the whole armour of God, that we may withstand in the evil day. Show us that not one moment should be unguarded, that we cannot afford to leave the watch-tower one instant, so quick and flashing are the movements of the foe; may we be vigilant; and may we be patient also, and desiring the Lord with all our love.

Minister unto us according to our need. Let every tiny flower have its globe of dew; let every little child have some touch of Thy gentle fingers; let every seeker find Thee, O Christ of God, and touch the hem of Thy garment. Thou hast made our lives precious unto us. Thou hast surrounded us with many beautiful things in creation. There is not a flower that grows that owes not its existence to Thy power and love. Surely Thou didst make the flowers too somewhat in Thine image and likeness,—so beautiful, so delicate, so almost spiritual. Enable us to consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, and to gather from all their sweet life how to grow ourselves.

May we, during the remainder of our days, walk wisely and well. May we answer Thy demands with a glad heart, an obedient will, an expectant desire, knowing that whoso serves Thee shall be honoured and crowned. We would be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect; we would be holy with God's holiness; we would wear no robe that is spotted by the world: give unto us the fine linen of the saints, and may we walk with them in white. *Amen.*

XC.]

[Scripture Reading: REVELATION iii. 17-22.]

*"Knocking! knocking! who is there?
Waiting, waiting, oh, how fair!
'Tis a pilgrim, strange and kingly,
Never such was seen before;
Ah, my soul, for such a wonder
Wilt thou not undo the door?"*

*"Knocking! knocking!—what, still there?
Waiting, waiting, grand and fair!
Yes, the pierced hand still knocketh,
And beneath the crownèd hair
Beam the patient eyes, so tender,
Of thy Saviour waiting there."*

LORD of our souls, we would now open the door of our heart, and bid Thee welcome to all our love. Thou hast laid up for us in Christ Jesus riches unsearchable; yea, all manner of wisdom and grace; consolation and joy, victory over death and an abundant entrance into heavenly places. In Him we lose all sense of hunger and loneliness, because in Him all fulness dwells, and through Him we have sweet fellowship with Thyself. We cannot see God and live, but we can see Jesus and walk with Him; we can come near Him and feel His gentle touch; we can hear Him and learn all His will. He is the Door, He is the Way, He is the Life; therefore our hearts adore Him, and our love goes out towards Him in deep and tender trust.

Lord, abide with us. Break our bread, and in so doing show us Thy glory and Thy goodness. Make our home Thy dwelling-place, and may our sick-chamber be Thy chosen sanctuary. For old men and little children we seek Thy blessing. For broken hearts and helpless lives we pray Thy healing. Grant to all of us such prosperity as will minister to our deeper trust in God. Sanctify our adversity, so that we shall rejoice even in sorrow and loss. In all things show us how Thou art training our lives for heavenly blessings and heavenly service. Blessed Saviour, help us to do all our work with loving and thankful hearts, and unto Thee, great Three in One, One in Three, shall be glory everlasting. *Amen.*

XCI.]

[Scripture Reading: LUKE xi. 1-13.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, though our breath is in our nostrils, yet hast Thou made our souls to continue with Thee in the blessedness of heaven evermore. We are of the earth—earthly, yet we know that we are of the heavens—heavenly. Sometimes we are in the flesh, and sometimes in the spirit. But we know that Thy meaning concerning us in Christ Jesus the Lord is to set us on high among the princes of Thy kingdom. We pray that we may live our better selves. Deliver us from evil. We would always live where the sun shines, and all the tenderest and sweetest flowers bloom; but sudden darkness falls upon us, and cold winds chill our roots, so that we perish in unexpected and unseasonable winter. Yet we can pray. So long as we can pray we cannot die. We have fellowship with the Triune God; and our fellowship is sweet, full of life and hope, the beginning and the pledge of heaven. We will not give way to fear that kills the heart, or to anxiety that would corrode and destroy us. We will say to every enemy, in the Name of Christ, Get thee behind me. We will not suffer our souls to believe that Thou dost purpose to destroy them. Thou hast no pleasure in death; yea, Thou dost turn it into a minister of life, and out of corruption Thou dost bring golden harvest and autumnal richness. So we shall not die, but live; yea, though we die in the flesh, we shall certainly live in the spirit, and in our flesh shall we see God. We shall be satisfied when we awake with Thy likeness. We shall see Jesus as He is, and the sight shall transfigure us into His own beauty.

Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. *Amen.*

XCII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xlvii.

*" Wide as His vast dominion lies,
Make the Creator's Name be known;
Loud as His thunder shout His praise,
And sound it lofty as His throne.
Each of His works His Name displays,
But they can ne'er fulfil His praise.*

*" Jehovah! 'tis a glorious word!
O may it dwell on every tongue!
But saints who best have known the Lord
Are bound to raise the noblest song.
Each of His works His Name displays,
But they can ne'er fulfil His praise."*

GREAT is the Lord and greatly to be praised: let everything that hath breath praise the Lord! Shall men be dumb amid all the great thanksgiving? Hear us when we praise Thee, Father, in the Name of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, for all the gifts of Thy hand. Thou openest Thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing; that Thou givest them they gather. If Thou wert to turn aside from Thy worlds they would die in the infinite darkness; Thy look is a smile; Thy smile is a blessing.

For all Thy care and love, Thy patience and mercy unutterable, we now bless Thee; we stand in Thy love; because God's mercy endureth for ever are we spared until this time. Sanctify unto us all the providences of life; out of sorrow may we draw joy, may disappointment constrain us to pray more deeply and tenderly at the Cross, and may the whole mockery of life and time and space drive us into the holy of holies, that there we may see the beauty of God, and strengthen our hearts in Christian faith. Be with us this day and every day; may we love our duty and do it bravely; if suffering come in our way may we take it up as a cross in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, the great Sufferer, and may it be sanctified to our soul's help and progress.

Bless each of us now bending at Thy throne; enrich each with some blessing; then the whole day shall be beautiful, and the night shall be a rest and a blessing. *Amen.*

XCIII.]

[Scripture Reading: 1 TIMOTHY i. 12-20.]

*" Go not far from me, O my strength,
Whom all my times obey;
Take from me anything Thou wilt,
But go not Thou away,—
And let the storm that does Thy work
Deal with me as it may.*

*" On Thy compassion I repose,
In weakness and distress;
I will not ask for greater ease,
Lest I should love Thee less.
Oh! 'tis a blessed thing for me
To need Thy tenderness."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, how tender Thou art, and how patient in all love and mercy, only they can tell who know Thee. Is not our life a daily pain to Thee, because a daily sin? Yet Thy mercy rolls through our life like a river of healing; yea, Thy strength is above us like a sun, and round about us like a shield and buckler. Weaker are we than a bruised reed, yet there are in us energies and mysteries of power that often make us afraid by their terribleness; truly we are fearfully and wonderfully made, and our soul is a secret from the Lord. Is not our breath in our nostrils? Yet we face the storm and climb the rough hill, as those who are clothed with immortality! Are we not doomed to lie down in the dust, and is not our flesh to be destroyed by the mean worm? Yet upon the inner altar of the heart Thou hast kindled a fire which burns the cruel sceptre of death itself. O wondrous life, O still more wondrous Lord! Our life is full of Thy favour as the vine is full of the living sap, therefore we stand above the fear of death and hold in sacred contempt the victory of the grave. Save our recollection from becoming despair, and deliver our memory from the burden of unpardoned sin. We look back, and our guilt fills us with shame; oh, then, when the fire burns us, may we see the Cross of Christ more clearly than ever, and know that no sin of ours is beyond the power of His blood to cleanse. Lord help us, every one. Let Thy goodness appear unto Thy servants, and withhold not from our eyes the continual pledges of Thy love. *Amen.*

XCIV.]

[Scripture Reading : MARK xiv. 17-25.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we bow down before Thee in spirit, and bless Thee for a peace which the world did not give, and which the world cannot take away. This peace Thou hast given us in Christ Jesus Thy Son. The Dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. Enable us to be patient, watchful, devout, and trustful, knowing that all clouds shall be blown away, and that the clear light from heaven shall shine on all our troubled life. We have sinned against Thee by impatience. We have not accepted Thine own way of life and thought and action, but have urged ourselves upon Thee almost with violence. From this time forth we will say : The will of the Lord be done, bring with it what it may : joy or sadness, gain or loss. If Thou wilt teach us to say this from our hearts, we shall have no more pain in life.

Thou hast led us by a wonderful way. If we could have foreseen all the road, we dare not have taken one step upon it ; but Thou givest the days to us one by one ; with no heritage of years dost Thou trust us, but with one day, with one short hour, with the sunrise and the sunset : this is the way of the Lord, and we have proved it to be good. We know not what a day may bring forth, nor would we know, for that knowledge would be pain, that revelation would be sadness, perhaps despair. Lord, hold our eyes that we may not see to-morrow. This day would we know, as we have never known before, how unspeakable is the peace which Thou canst work in the heart of man. Turn us away from our own inventions, and destroy within us all vain expectations ; then lead us to the infinite salvation wrought out by our Lord. *Amen.*

XCV.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN iii. 14-21.]

GRACIOUS FATHER, be unto us all what we need most. We need daily love, hourly love, continual love. We must find the Heart that warms all things, or we shall die in darkness and have no more hope. We know not what life is, except that it is pain, fear, a blossom that never comes to fruition, and a grave that is never satisfied, until we come to Christ and hear His sweet words of love. Then we see the Father. Then we hear a voice in the cloud. Then we know that the storms are but driving us home. Blessed be the Christ of God for joy deep and pure, and for hope that cannot be disappointed. We love Him with more and more love every day, and our love brings power to follow the mystery of His word. In Christ we have all things, even heaven and immortality, and the very secret of God. Abide with us, Divine Comforter, and make every day holy.

Be round about our house, we pray Thee, that our home may be happy; direct us in all our way; visit us in our affliction, lest our souls perish in fear; be with us when the valley dips deeply, and be with us when the hill is very steep. When we come to the last river, do Thou speak the word that shall divide the water and cause us to pass through as on dry ground. We pray in the Name and power of the Saviour of the world. He is our Intercessor, and, blessed be God, He is our Interpreter. We leave all our prayers with Him. God bless us. Father, speak to our souls. Eternal Spirit, sanctify our thoughts. Lead us by the hand to the home created and secured by our Saviour's Cross.

*"Jesus! Lord, we kneel before Thee,
Bend from heaven Thy gracious ear;
While our waiting souls adore Thee,
Friend of helpless sinners, hear!
By Thy mercy,
O deliver us, good Lord!"*

*"From the depth of nature's blindness,
From the hardening power of sin,
From all malice and unkindness,
From the pride that lurks within,
By Thy mercy,
O deliver us, good Lord!"*

Amen.

XCVI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: JOHN xiv. 15-31.]

GIVER OF ALL GOOD, look upon us, we pray Thee, as children seeking a Father's blessing. We feel our need of Thy love. In Thy love we have sunshine and music and peace. All Thy love is made known to us in Jesus Christ Thy Son, for whose life and death we thank Thee as for Thy choicest gifts. We would love Thee with our whole heart. We would show our love by doing Thy will day by day, and seeking to please Thee in the whole action of life. Mercifully grant unto us Thy Holy Spirit, that every motive and thought and purpose may be made pure. We would enter more deeply into the meaning of Thy word, and live more truly in the spirit of Thy thought concerning us. Help us, we pray Thee, to grow in grace. May we be patient, longsuffering, and kind; may we be filled with the Holy Spirit of Christ. We bless Thee for all such desires. We know them to be amongst the good gifts and perfect gifts which come down from heaven. Help us to forgive, that we may be forgiven. What we cannot do in our own strength we can do in the strength of Christ. For that strength we pray. Thou knowest the weakness of the flesh, the power of temptation, and the attraction of the world; but there is nothing too hard for the Lord, therefore we go forth with true confidence and hope, sure that the Lord will be mindful of His own. Give us skill in our work. Make us patient with each other. May we tarry for the slow, and safely lead the blind. May young life enjoy its dewy morning, and old life enrich itself with divinest consolations. Lord God Almighty, the fulness of the earth is Thine, and Thine is the fulness of the sea; do Thou claim Thine own, and make the whole world glad.

To Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be everlasting praise.

Amen.

XCVII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM cxviii. 1-17.]

*"There is a book, who runs may read,
Which heavenly truth imparts;
And all the lore its scholars need,
Pure eyes and Christian hearts.*

*"The works of God, above, below,
Within us and around,
Are pages in that book, to show
How God Himself is found."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, hear us when at the Cross of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, in whose Name alone we are permitted to approach Thee, we say, Thou hast done all things well. Thou hast pronounced upon Thine own works, as the sun and the moon and the stars, the seas and the rivers and all growing and progressing life, and Thou didst say concerning all these, It is very good. We look upon Thy works, and wonder at ourselves; we are many selves in one; sometimes the evil is uppermost, sometimes we are all prayer; at other times our heart scorns Thy welcome to the altar; and sometimes our souls glow with thankfulness, and rise to join the choir of angels in their sweetest hymns. Between these experiences the whole conflict lies; there we doubt ourselves, and we cannot tell aught of the mystery of life. Thou dost not take us thus, Thou dost look upon us as to our intent and purpose and chief thought in life, and Thou wilt estimate us accordingly. With the Lord is righteous judgment. It is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of man. We will hope of ourselves, because we will hope in Christ Jesus; in ourselves we see but little ground for hope, in the eternal glorious Cross we see God manifest in the flesh, God dying for His universe: may we look on in solemn wonder and in devout thankfulness, and may we hear a voice from the cloud that gathers around the Cross, saying, This is My beloved Son, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. Thus melt our hearts, and bring our will in an attitude of obedience before Thy throne.

We commit ourselves to Thy tender care. Father in heaven, bless us each one, and breathe upon us Thy peace. *Amen.*

XCVIII.]

[Scripture Reading: HEBREWS i.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we would rest in Thine eternity, in our Father's sovereignty, in the throne of the One Majesty ; because the Lord reigneth, the earth should be all sunshine, and song, and joy, and worship. Hold us by our right hand, and we shall not be moved. To whom do we owe all revelation of Thyself and Thy purpose but to the Son that dwelt in Thy bosom from of old ? He is come up from everlasting, in His breath is eternity, in His look is all duration. He told us of Thy Fatherhood, of Thine hatred of sin, Thy love of righteousness, purity, and honour, and charity ; He told us this in words, He lived this in daily life, He sealed it with priestly sacrificial death, and He glorified this by His personal resurrection, that He might become our Advocate and Intercessor, making prayer for us when there was no prayer in our own lips. For all such thoughts we bless Thee ; they are our treasure, we live upon them, it is an infinite and inexhaustible inheritance ; the riches of Christ Jesus are unsearchable riches, therefore we can never be poor or weak, and we can never be defeated if we fight under the banner of the Cross.

The Lord's own Spirit, more beautiful than light, be with us : an inward glory, a lamp shining on the inward and hidden parts, that we may know what is right, not only in conduct, but in thought, and live that interior, profound life, which the ever-blessed Spirit Himself must approve. Help us to walk honestly and soberly before all men, and to do that which is right in all fearlessness, not regarding loss or pain, that the Cross may be ever glorified.

In our Saviour's Name, infinite in excellence, we ask great things. Lord, if our prayer be great, Thy Throne is greater, Thy Cross is infinitely more. At the Cross we leave our morning prayer. *Amen.*

XCIX.]

[Scripture Reading : ROMANS viii. 32-39.]

*"When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!"*

O THOU MIGHTY SAVIOUR, Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, fasten our eyes upon Thy shameful yet glorious Cross, and help us by the power of the Eternal Spirit to know its holy meaning, and answer its tenderest appeal. Every day we need the Cross. We begin this day by seeking to behold it more clearly than we have ever done. Reveal Thyself to our hearts, O Thou who didst love us even unto death! Saviour, forsake us not, nor take Thy Holy Spirit from us. We cling to Thee. We will not let Thee go until Thou dost bless us. Thou wilt answer the desire which Thou Thyself hast created in us.

ETERNAL FATHER, as Thou didst not spare Thine only begotten Son, but didst freely deliver Him up for us all, Thou wilt with Him also freely give us all things. May we enter into the fulness of that promise, that we may be made rich with the unsearchable riches of Christ. Help us to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him, knowing that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, and that our way is marked out from eternity. Jesus, still lead on, is our daily prayer. Lord, hear that prayer, and graciously answer it this day. Help us to keep the Cross in full view. May it be our answer to temptation and our comfort in sorrow. May we accept Thy love as a stimulus, and see in every one of Thy promises a new persuasion to duty. Save us from indolence and selfishness. To this end let nothing come between our vision and the Cross. May we ever steadfastly look upon our Priest and Saviour. Lord, hear us, and be merciful unto us, as unto hearts that confess and abhor their sins. *Amen.*

C.]

[Scripture Reading : LUKE xviii. 35-43.]

*" Heal us, Immanuel ! hear our prayer ;
We wait to feel Thy touch ;
Deep-wounded souls to Thee repair,
And, Saviour, we are such.*

*" Our faith is feeble, we confess ;
We faintly trust Thy word ;
But wilt Thou pity us the less ?
Be that far from Thee, Lord."*

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, Thou Son of God, our prayer unto Thee now is that we may receive our sight. Thou dost open the eyes of men ; Thou dost give expression to every faculty, investing each with its full liberty, and causing each to bear fruit unto the glory of Thy Name. Blessed Saviour, breathe upon us ; give us to feel that our whole life has been touched by Thy holy influence : then shall we be glad, and lay up a memory that shall be pleasant and precious evermore. We come to Thee always : for Thou dost know the human heart in all its void and poverty, in all its deceitfulness and rebellion, and alone Thou knowest how to supply our every want. Thou didst die for us, the just for the unjust ; Thou didst bear our sins in Thine own body on the tree ; Thou wast wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Thee ; by Thy stripes we are healed. We cannot heal ourselves ; Thou alone canst heal us. Lord, send not one of us away unhealed. Thou Friend of sinners, we cast ourselves upon Thee ; in Thee we rest, in Thee we hope, in Thee alone is our confidence. Lord Jesus, dwell with us ; break bread to our hunger, and we shall hunger no more ; find water for our thirst, and we shall thirst no more.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, abide with us, then our little shall be much, our house shall be a home, our home shall be a sanctuary, and the whole earth shall be none other than the house of God,—yea, the gate of heaven. *Amen.*

CI.]

[Scripture Reading : JOHN xvi. 1-16.]

OUR FATHER, which art in heaven, in the morning we would lift up our voice in praise and sing of Thy tender mercy. Thus would we begin the day, and thus would we spend all its hours. We would spend our lives in repaying the Lord that which is due unto His goodness; and when we have done all we shall be unprofitable servants. But then our worthiness shall be in the Lamb that was slain: He will make our meanest deeds great; He will clothe with majesty our poorest efforts, and in the sacrifice which He rendered unto the law shall all our meaner sacrifices be made acceptable and complete, and thus we shall be saved, not by our own arm, but by the mighty power and the tender grace of the one Messiah, sent to redeem and purify the world.

We go forth in Thy Name to do Thy work, to earn our daily bread, and to read the lessons of Thy wonderful providence. May our hearts be full of holy thought and feeling, yea, wholly taken up with the love of the blessed Saviour, that the enemy may have no power against us. There is no joy but in Thy love. There is no prosperity but in Thy favour. Lord, teach us these sacred truths, lest we trust to our own wisdom, and lean on our own failing strength.

ETERNAL SPIRIT, be in us, and near us, and round about us, that even on earth we may live the life of heaven. May our every thought be high, may every desire be pure, may every motive be simple. May we this day do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. Father, answer us. Father, enrich us with Thine own peace. God of all grace, Thou wilt not leave us comfortless.

*" Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His tender, last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter bequeathed,
With us to dwell.*

*" Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness pitying see,
O make our hearts Thy dwelling-place,
And worthier Thee."*

Amen.

CII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : LUKE iv. 14-32.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we bless Thee for the hunger of the heart, which Thou alone canst satisfy. Eat and drink abundantly, is the welcome of God to the soul that hungers and thirsts. Thou dost not tempt the appetite, and mock it; Thou dost excite the hunger, and answer it with great satisfactions : blessed be the Name of the Lord. Once we were content to live in a far-off land, and to do work unworthy of us, and to eat whatever the earth might supply. Now we have seen Jesus ; and, behold, He hath made all things new. Blessed be His Name evermore. We have gathered around Him to listen to Him, and we have wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. We will still remain with Jesus ; we will walk with Him, and listen to Him, and never speak one word but in loving and obedient questionings that we may obtain further light, larger tidings of the ever-coming kingdom, the reign of light, the sovereignty of love. Jesus will tell us about this ever-dawning day : is He not the sun thereof, the golden glory of the whole ? He is the Son of man, Son of Mary, Son of God : He comes to us along every path, He touches our life at every point ; He shines upon us like a sun that fills the whole arch of day. He loved us and made sacrifice for us. He was bruised for our iniquities. By His stripes we are healed.

Pity us in all the life we lead : it is so fretted and vexed ; it is stirred with so many tumults, and made noisy by many an uproar which we cannot control. How frail we are Thou knowest ; how easily tempted and how easily deceived. The Lord be pitiful to our weakness, and save us from despair. The Lord give us rest awhile when we are very weary ; dry our tears when we are very sad ; allure us by the light of many a sign onward to the Cross and to the victory that lies beyond. *Amen.*

CIII.]

[Scripture Reading: HEBREWS iv. 12-16.]

*" Beyond, beyond that boundless sea,
Above that dome of sky,
Farther than thought itself can flee,
Thy dwelling is on high;
Yet dear the awful thought to me,
That Thou, my God, art nigh.*

*" O! not in circling depth or height,
But in the conscious breast;
Present to faith, though veiled from sight,
There doth His Spirit rest.
O come, Thou Presence Infinite!
And make Thy creature blest."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we cannot see Thee, but Thou seest us, every one. Thou knowest our motive, our thought, our desire; all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Thou knowest our frame, Thou rememberest that we are but dust; Thou dost not expect more from us than our strength can give; nay, Thou dost not expect anything from us which Thou Thyself hast not first given. If we love Thee, we love Thee because Thou didst first love us; our love is an answer. The love of God is from everlasting, and is unchangeable; God is love. What love is we cannot tell; we see Jesus Christ, and in Him is the love of God shown forth; He went about doing good, He bore our sins, He carried our infirmities, He stooped over our weakness, He brake bread that we might not die of hunger, and He gave us water when there was no fountain near at hand. All this He did because He first died for us; He died from the beginning; He is the Lamb of God, whose blood was shed from before the foundation of the world. Help us to remember this; it fills our imagination with life, it bows down our whole heart and spirit with unspeakable tenderness. We bless Thee for a Saviour whose action covers the whole necessity of sin; He was before it, He shall be after it; He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. Help us, therefore, to see sin as but the question of a moment; help us to believe that sin will one day be forgotten, and that we shall in heaven see God in His pureness and be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. *Amen.*

CIV.]

[Scripture Reading : TITUS iii. 1-7.]

*" Lord, we confess our numerous faults,
How great our guilt has been !
Foolish and vain were all our thoughts,
And all our lives were sin.*

*" But, O my soul, for ever praise,
For ever love His Name
Who turns thy feet from dangerous ways
Of folly, sin, and shame."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, do Thou hear our confession of sin, and give us answers of peace at the Cross of Jesus Christ our Lord. We have done those things which we ought not to have done ; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done ; and there is no health in us. If we confess our sins, Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Our sins we now confess. We keep back nothing from the Lord. Thou searchest the heart and triest the reins of the children of men ; yet if they confess with their tongue and believe with their heart they shall enter into the joy and the liberty of pardon. This is the gospel which we have received from Thee, the gospel of Thy Son our Saviour, One only and Infinite : help us to believe it, to rely upon it, and to enjoy all that it offers of forgiveness and peace. We have sinned against Thee in thought, and word, and deed : against Thee, Thee only have we sinned, and done evil in Thy sight. There is no health in us. There is none righteous, no, not one. Judging ourselves by ourselves, we boast ; but judging ourselves by Thy holiness, who can stand before the light of that midday ? Lord, pity us ; for Christ's sake pardon us, and grant unto us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may repeat the sin no more. We hear the sweet music of Jesus, saying, Go and sin no more. Help us to accept His word and to live worthily of it. Give us then grace upon grace, that we may be strong in the day when the enemy is mighty ; may we vanquish him, not in our own strength, but in the almightiness of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

CV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : HEBREWS ix. 11-28.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou dost love us with a great love. Thou art our Father in heaven. Thou didst make us and not we ourselves, and in each one of us Thou dost see somewhat of Thine own image and likeness. We have fallen; we have utterly broken down: yet still our hearts tell us that we are Thine, and that Thou hast come after us; and we know from Thy word that day by day Thou art seeking us as a shepherd seeks a lost lamb. Thou dost come after us to seek us, to find us, to save us. We know we need Thee. We can do little of ourselves, and that little ends in vexation and disappointment. Our hands are feeble, our purposes are broken off, and even our prayers are marked by want of effect and prevalence with God; but, blessed be Thy Name, there is a Mediator between God and man, whose Name is Jesus Christ, Son of man, Son of God, Priest of the Universe; who has shown us how life may come out of death, how sorrow may be the root of joy, and how all life's tears may be turned into life's chief blessing. Jesus Christ loved us, died for us, and for us rose again, and He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Thus are our prayers made availing because the Son of God takes them from our lips, enlarges and ennobles them; and because of His Cross we have great answers of peace in our hearts.

Look upon our dear little ones; say something to each about the meaning of young life: about the dawn, and the dew of the morning, and the bud of promise; and draw them to Thyself as with the cords of love. May they early learn how to pray, and to find in the word Father a grace that brightens all darkness, and that covers all mystery with light.
Amen.

CVI.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM CXXX.

*" Out of the depths I cry to Thee,
Lord God, O hear my wailing!
Thy gracious ear incline to me,
And make my prayer availing!
On my misdeeds in mercy look,
O deign to blot them from Thy book,
Or who can stand before Thee ?*

*" Thou canst be merciful while just,
This is my hope's foundation;
On Thy redeeming grace I trust,
Grant me, then, Thy salvation.
Shielded by Thee I stand secure,
Thy word is firm, Thy promise sure,
And I rely upon Thee."*

FATHER OF ALL MERCIES and God of all grace, because Thou hast for Christ's sake forgiven us our sins we would abound in love and in thanksgiving, in labour and in acceptable service. In Thy pardon is life, and in Thy favour is immortality of joy. We would think of Jesus until our hearts burn within us, and until our life is wholly given to His service. We pray to be enriched with the peace of God, and to be made strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Such desires Thou canst not neglect, because they are of Thine own creation. Holy Spirit, as the prayer is Thine, so let Thine be the answer.

As a household we would have the Lord—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to be our abiding Guest. Come to our dwelling and make it Thine. Consecrate this house, and here let Thy Name be praised. Saviour, guide us; beset us behind and before; lay Thine hand upon us; yea, evermore have us in Thy holy keeping. On master and on servant, on old and on young, let the sunshine of Thy love fall as a daily blessing. All we ask is in the Name, ever-blessed, of the Saviour of the world.

O Saviour of the world, the Son, Lord Jesus, stir up Thy strength, and help us, we humbly beseech Thee. Make it appear that Thou art our Saviour and mighty deliverer. O save us, that we may praise Thee, we humbly beseech Thee. Draw near, according to Thy promise, from the throne of Thy glory: look down and hear our crying, we humbly beseech Thee. *Amen.*

CVII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM xlvii.]

*" O Thou from whom all goodness flows,
I lift my soul to Thee;
In all my sorrows, conflicts, woes,
Good Lord, remember me.*

*" When trials sore obstruct my way,
And ills I cannot flee,
O let my strength be as my day;
Good Lord, remember me."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou knowest the weariness of this transient life, its burdens, its darkness, its helplessness, its griefs, its great temptations : and Thou knowest also what we need ; what sorrow our hearts carry, Thou knowest down to the last hot tear ; what we fear Thou knowest : yea, every shadow that darkens upon us. What hand, O Lord, but Thine can minister to a life so needy ? But Thou hast a river of life ; the river of God is full of water ; Thou hast the balm of Gilead, Thyself art the Physician there. So we are bold in our love, we are ardent in our prayer ; we will open our mouth widely that Thou mayest fill it, for it is Thy delight to give. Thou didst so love the world as to give Thy Son, O Father of us all, that He might die for us. In the Name of our crucified and risen Lord, we now come to Thee.

Teach us to know ourselves ; when we think we are good, show us an aspect of our nature which will humble us ; when we think we are too bad to be saved, show us some vision of the Cross that shall turn midnight into midday ; when we are hard of heart towards one another, soften us by the Spirit of Jesus ; when we would become worldly and selfish, and cold and bitter, then show us what deadly wounds we are inflicting upon the crucified Son of God. Make us humble, true, virtuous, honourable, scorning to lie, loving to pray, earnestly desiring to turn our whole life into a living song of praise and homage and adoration addressed to our Father in heaven. Thus may we exemplify the Saviour ; thus may we live the life of the Cross ; thus may we be made beautiful with the comeliness of self-sacrifice. *Amen.*

CVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: MATTHEW xvi. 21-28.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou hast brought us from the image and aspect of death, and made us live again in conscious joy and hope. This is Thy miracle, Eternal Father. Thou dost put us to sleep, and Thou dost wake us again, and, lo, when we awake the fire is burning, Thy gifts are spread before us, and the morning is an opportunity for new service. Thou makest the beauty of the dawn, Thou sendest upon the children of men the glory of advancing day; the noontide is Thine, the evening star Thou didst make, all the circuit of the light Thou didst appoint: behold, we are surrounded by proofs of Thy power, Thy nearness, and Thy love. Open our eyes that we may see the King, the Creator, the Redeemer of men: it will be night in our soul if we do not see God; the light of the day will be no glory if it bring not with it the higher light which is above the brightness of the sun.

We bless Thee for all Thy tender care, Thy patient love, yea, even for Thy trying discipline. Thou hast been stern with us, but it was for our good; Thou hast taken away some things from us, but we are the richer for our sanctified poverty; Thou hast given us abundantly of Thy grace, Thou hast filled every goblet with the wine of Thine heart, and Thou hast called upon us to drink of the river of Thy love, and to be joyous in the Lord evermore. The bread we eat Thou didst make in the field for us; the garments we wear Thou didst make every one that we might be shielded from the cold; our habitation is of the Lord's building, and Thou dost spare it in the time of tempest and flood; hear us, then, when we say at the Cross, and in the Name of God the Son, who loved us and gave Himself for us, Thanks be unto God for His lovingkindness and tender mercy. *Amen.*

CIX.]

*" Lord, from my bed again I rise,
To offer up the sacrifice
Of praise and prayer to Thee:
I laid me down to sleep at night;
I trusted in Thine arm of might;
Thine arm protected me.*

[Scripture Reading : PSALM i.

*" Uphold Thy servant through the day,
Direct my steps in wisdom's way,
Let me not turn aside;
Let me not walk where scorners walk,
And sinful men profanely talk;
Still be my God and Guide."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we would know Thee in Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the brightness of Thine image ; He is God with us. We call Him Emmanuel ; when we are with Jesus we are with God : if we know the Son we know the Father, and we have fellowship with the Father through the Son by the mighty power of God the Holy Ghost. We would be in the sanctuary of Thy presence, yea, in the very holy of holies, by the blood of the Cross. Help us to know that if we sin we have a Mediator and an Advocate. May we not deal with our own sin as if we could handle it skilfully and successfully : only Christ can handle sin ; the blood of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, cleanseth from all sin.

BLESSED SAVIOUR, Thou knowest the joy, the sorrow, the daily tragedy of life ; its continual death, its incessant resurrection ; Thou knowest all the need of this wondrous heart ; Thou didst make us and not we ourselves. What we are, what we need, what we can do, what we are yet to be, Thou knowest. Lord Jesus, have us in Thy holy keeping ; let the day be a door into heaven, let the light be a symbol of a still higher blessing, and let all the music of these lower places give our souls hint, suggestion, and promise of the eternal music of the skies. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. May we all take part in that great anthem, for He was wounded for our transgressions.

We say this prayer, where alone it can be heard, at the Cross of the Son of God. *Amen.*

CX.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PHILIPPIANS iv. 4-20.]

THOU art our Father in heaven, we are Thy children upon the earth; may we look unto Thee for everything, knowing that we are nothing of ourselves, but that in Christ Jesus Thy Son we can have all things and abound. Help us to remember how little we are and frail; we are of yesterday and know nothing: how silent then should we be before the Lord, and before all the mysteries which make this life a glory and a pain. Help us to be very careful in our word, very pure in our motive, large and tender and loving in all our purpose; thus shall our life be filled with the Spirit of Christ, and all we learn and do shall add to the glory of His Name amongst men.

We bless Thee that we love the Saviour, for this love makes all other love large and pure; we rejoice that we no longer look to ourselves for help, but to the Strong for strength, to the Everlasting for a refuge from all the care and trial, the tears and trouble, of this time-state. Thou hast been good to us with greatness of love; nothing hast Thou withheld from us that would do us good: we therefore ask Thee to permit us to put our hand into Thine that we may be guided like little children along all the way of life. Make the old young, make the young wise, make the strong consecrated souls to God, and may they who are very weak and faint and self-distrustful be brought to the Rock of Ages for security and rest and joy. Look upon us in all our relationships in life, and command Thy blessing to rest upon us according to our need. Thou hast never forsaken us, Thou wilt not forsake us now: this is the confidence we have in Thee, that having given the Cross Thou canst not and wilt not withhold anything that is good for us. *Amen.*

CXI.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM xcvi.]

WE come to Thee, Giver of all light and good, with our morning praise. Thou hast done great things for us, whereof we are glad; Thou hast kept our house, Thou hast watched our bed, Thou hast spread our table; Thou hast given unto us of the bread of life. Now will we sing unto the Lord a new song, and be joyful before Him with great gladness. We have nothing that we have not received. In all we have may we see a proof of God's goodness; then shall our bread be doubled, and the cruse of oil shall never fail.

Thou dost call upon us to acknowledge Thee as the Giver of every good and perfect gift, and this we do with grateful hearts. All things are Thine: the gold and the silver are Thine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; all souls are Thine; we ourselves are not our own, we are bought with a price. Thou dost call upon us to glorify Thee in our body and in our spirit, which are Thine. Thou dost call for a full offering of praise, Thou wilt not have an offering that is broken; we, therefore, would bring our whole souls to Thee, and give ourselves wholly to Thy keeping. When Thou, O Son of God, didst redeem the world, Thou didst redeem it wholly, Thou didst ransom the prey from the captor. The world is Thine, by right of creation and by right of redemption. Come Thou, whose right it is, and reign. May the Spirit of the Living One abide with us; may grace, mercy, and peace be our stay and comfort; in the darkness be Thou our security, and in the light be Thou our song.

*"Come, Thou everlasting Spirit,
Bring to every thankful mind
All the Saviour's dying merit,
All His sufferings for mankind,
True Recorder of His passion,
Now the living faith impart:
Now reveal His great salvation;
Preach His gospel to each heart.*

*"Come, Thou Witness of His dying;
Come, Remembrancer divine,
Let us feel Thy power applying
Christ to every soul, and mine.
Plead in us with inward groaning,
While for Him we pierced, we grieve,
May we each, the grace atoning
Of the sprinkled blood receive."*

Amen.

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CXII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: 2 PETER i.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou hast given unto us exceeding great and precious promises. Help us to understand that they are given to us to urge our life onward to higher attainment in knowledge and in grace. May we not rest content with the promises, but may we accept them as calling us to higher life, and creating for us larger opportunities of growth and usefulness.

We thank Thee for all the consolations of Thy word: we need them; our life is full of care and sorrow; life is a long conflict: we are stung through and through by disappointment; we have sown seed, and the field has cast it out; we have failed and are mortified: we have gone forth and brought back nothing but darkness. This is the story of our life, day by day. Yet Thou hast a purpose in all this trial; Thou art bringing us onward towards perfection of character. Sanctify all our disappointments, overrule all our conflicts, and at the end we shall say, Thou hast done all things well.

Watch over us, we pray Thee, by night and by day: suffer no evil to befall us: multiply Thy mercies until they throw our sins into an infinite oblivion. Regard those of us who are engaged in business; Thou knowest how narrowly we miss the gin and the snare of those who would destroy our life. Thou knowest the callings, the anxieties, the responsibilities of Thy servants who are in the market-place. O that we, surrounded by the most potent and importunate temptations, may be able to show that man shall not live by bread alone. Give us such a view of life, such a conception of its grandeur and its destinies, as shall lift us above all fear, and bless us with a rest which no enemy can disturb. *Amen.*

CXIII.]

[Scripture Reading : LUKE xxiv. 13-35.]

*" Bread of the world, in mercy broken,
Wine of the soul, in mercy shed;
By whom the words of life were spoken,
And in whose death our sins are dead;*

*" Look on the heart by sorrow broken,
Look on the tears by sinners shed,
And be Thy feast to us the token
That by Thy grace our souls are fed."*

BLESSED SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, abide with us that we may abide in Thee. As the branch abideth in the vine, so may we abide in Christ. Without Him we can do nothing. Lord, abide with us ; break our bread, and in the breaking of bread show Thyself to be the Lord Eternal, the Son of God from before the foundation of the world. Blessed is the bread which Thou dost break ; there is a continual feast in it. What Thou dost touch with Thy fingers, O Son of God, becomes abundant and beautiful and satisfying. Feed us with the bread of life : Lord, evermore give us this bread : it feeds the soul, it makes the spirit strong.

Lord, abide with us ; comfort us with exceeding comfort, lest we be swallowed up of sorrow, and darkened by the spirit of fear. Thou knowest what our life is, shattered and torn, lying around us in many a ruin without shape or meaning ; Thou knowest how our vows have been broken, and our prayers have been plucked back from heaven without answer and without blessing ; Thou knowest us altogether. Do Thou pity us, spare us, and work out in us all the way of Thine own love. Forgive all our sin ; one word of Thine spoken at the Cross, and behold all our sins are dispelled and forgotten. Cry unto us by all the ministries of nature, and especially speak to us by the still small voice of the Spirit, saying that our iniquities are pardoned ; then shall we know the joy of release, then shall we know the delight of liberty.

Hear us in our prayer, when we pray with bent head and self-misgiving heart, and throw our arms of love and faith around the eternal Cross. *Amen.*

CXIV.]

[*Scripture Reading*: 2 THESSALONIANS iii.]

ALmighty GOD, we come to Thee for rest. We need rest, for the weariness of the world is upon us, and all the memories of time combine to make us afraid of ourselves, afraid of the future, and afraid of Thee. We have been in the valley, and there we have done the things we ought not to have done: we have broken Thy commandments: with an outstretched hand we have defied Thee. Why dost Thou spare us? Surely it is because Thy mercy endureth for ever, Thy pity is greater than our sin, and Thy grace abounds where our iniquity reaches its highest point. Thou dost spare us because of a purpose infinite in its mercy: we know not the measure thereof, neither can we sound the depth of the Lord's compassion; but Thou art preserving us and visiting us with discipline day by day, and guarding and defending our life, not that Thou mayest at the last destroy it, but bring it in with all the fulness of an infinite redemption to serve Thy throne in ages and worlds yet to come.

Thou Giver of all good, how bountiful is Thy hand. Not only is there food on the table, there are flowers. Thou wilt not give us only enough, Thou wilt give us enough and to spare. Our greatest prayer is nothing; our holiest covetousness asks but a crumb from God's infinite hand. When our poor prayer is ended, we are overwhelmed with the riches of Thy grace. Thou art able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Come into our home life, we humbly pray Thee. We love the home, the very walls are sacred to us, the roof is a symbol of Divine protection. God the Holy Ghost abide with us to make us like the Lord. For the Saviour we praise Thee every day, for every day we need His whole Cross; may God the Son dwell in our hearts evermore. *Amen.*

CXV.]

[Scripture Reading : JOB xxxvii.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou art great, yet how condescending Thou art ! Thy glory is above the heavens, yet Thy love is seeking us out night and day, that it may do us good. All we have seen of Thy majesty is but a whisper of Thy power ; the thunder of it, who could hear, and live ? Thou art the high and lofty One inhabiting eternity whose Name is Holy ; Thou art the condescending and gentle One, finding a sanctuary in the broken heart. Thou numberest the stars, and Thou healest the heart that is sore. May we see Thee in all Thy aspects, and know Thee to be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of salvation, the mighty God who is mighty not to destroy, but to save. The Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. May we know the power of His salvation : may we yield ourselves to all His pity, His solicitude, His dying, rising, triumphing love ; then shall we have rest in our souls, and a sweet, tender, all-inclusive, ever-abiding comfort. May we be the temples of the Holy Ghost, and may we know that the Holy Ghost dwelleth in us by the pureness of our spirit, by the loftiness of our desires, by all the kindness and longsuffering of our heart. May we prove that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost by bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit ; may we be beautiful with holiness, may our charm be in our simplicity, in our reality of character, in our self-sacrificing beneficence ; then shall men know that we have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him, and then all our daily business shall be easy, life itself shall be a solemn sacrifice, and our eating and drinking shall be as a sacrament.

*" So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess ;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine.*

*" Thus shall we best proclaim abroad
The honours of our Saviour God,
When the salvation reigns within,
And grace subdues the power of sin."*

Amen.

CXVI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: MATTHEW XXV. 31-46.]

BLESSED SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, if Thou wilt Thou canst make us clean. But we know Thou wilt: we need not plead with Thee; the will is wanting in ourselves, not in God; the Lord waits to be gracious: He yearns to cleanse us and redeem us, and give us eternal lifting up. How then can we answer the patience, the love, and the yearning of God? When we say we will come, we cannot wholly reach the point; our purpose is broken off in the middle, our prayers are stifled within us; when our prayer is but half ended, behold, some evil power beclouds the soul, and we cannot finish what we have begun. This is a troubled life; a daily struggle; but Thy grace is sufficient for us. Thou dost accept a tower half built as if it were wholly complete, if so be that our purpose is interrupted by the enemy, and we fail not for lack of love. Thou dost take cold water as if it were richest wine, if the cold water is all that we can give Thee. We bless Thee for these considerations; they make us strong, they humble us that they may lift us up: they give us a sense of our own weakness that we may be drawn to the eternal strength of God.

We have done the things which we ought not to have done; our sin is our daily distress; we loathe it and repeat it; we pray for its forgiveness and then commit it again. Yet the blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son cleanseth from all sin. If our daily sin be upon us, so is the daily sacrifice near at hand—the eternal Cross, the way to pardon. God forbid that we should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We would be fellow-sufferers with Christ: He atoning, we repenting: He the one Propitiation, and we the receivers of the atonement which He made. The Lord hear us at the Cross. The Lord speak pardon to our souls. *Amen.*

CXVII.]

[Scripture Reading: JOB xiv. 1-15.]

ALmighty GOD, Thou knowest our life: what is it but a flying shadow, a dying vapour? Behold we are as the grass that is consumed in the oven, and in our strength there is no duration; our joys are bubbles that burst upon the stream. Help us to lay up treasure in heaven; may Christ be our wealth; may the Son of God be our chief possession; may Jesus abide with us, dwelling in the heart, ruling the will, directing our every step, then we shall be rich with inexhaustible treasures.

As for our sin, dare we name such blackness? We plead the precious blood. The blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son cleanseth from all sin. Oh, Thou who dost forgive, who hast paid a ransom for men, and whose delight it is to release from the shame and torment of sin, come to each heart with pardon and liberty.

Look upon the busy man, lest he be so busy as to let the King pass by, lest he seek in the dust and find nothing there but a pit for his body. Give comfort and hope to those who are nearing the end of life: let the evening be quiet, take the storm out of the clouds, and let Thy glory break through. Look upon the young, let them be full of life and fire, every look an expectation, every word a vow of nobler life. Hide within young hearts Thy living word, then shall they possess an eloquence which cannot be answered.

The Lord help us all to earn our bread; the Lord watch over us in our going out and coming in. Bless our house: do Thou keep the key of its door, and upon the windows pour the radiant light of Thy blessing.

*" God the Father, throned on high;
Saviour who didst come to die;
Spirit who dost sanctify:
Lord, in mercy hear us.*

*" At Thy feet our thoughts we lay;
Make Thine own the words we say;
Make our lives more pure each day:
Lord, in mercy hear us."*

Amen.

CXVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading: Acts iv. 1-12.*]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we come to Thee in the Name of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Saviour, and not ours only but the Saviour of the whole world. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the only Mediator between God and man. We come to Thee, therefore, through Him alone: in Him is our worthiness, in Him is our strength. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. Help us to find rest in Christ, refuge in the Cross, and peace in the holy blood. Let Thy word dwell in us richly as a new life, and a new light, the very glory of heaven, the very peace of God: so shall we have an answer to every tempter, a refuge in the time of every tempest, and our peace shall be complete because it shall be of the nature of the tranquillity of God.

Thou art always careful of us. We cannot understand Thy care. We could understand Thy crushing us because of the provocation of our sins, but why Thou shouldst save us, and spare us, and mightily redeem us with blood is a mystery of love, which we cannot comprehend: yet it is enough for us to know that Thou doest all things in wisdom and in love. To-day is the battle and to-morrow the mystery, and on the third day dost Thou perfect the issue. Help us to fight, to wait, to worship, to suffer, to endure with noble courage, and un murmuring patience, knowing that the end will come as a great surprise of hidden love, a revelation of infinite tenderness.

The Lord overrule all things to happy ends; the Lord pardon us, through Jesus Christ the Priest and Saviour of the world. The Lord spare us yet a little longer that we may work more heartily, and more successfully. At Thine own time, not at ours, send for us to the Home Land. *Amen.*

CXIX.]

[Scripture Reading: I PETER ii. 11-25.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we would be godly, therefore are we under Thine own inspiration, for this is no wish of our own heart, it is the gift, it is the voice of God. We were as sheep going astray, but now we have returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. We stray no more with our heart's intent—surprised sometimes into forbidden ways; overtaken in many a fault; every day we have some confession to make before Thy throne. Yet in our heart's inner heart—the deep secret place of the soul—we love Thee. We are the children of God; we are born again by the mighty power of the Holy Ghost. This is the miracle of the Cross; this is the triumph of the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

Merciful Father, Thou knowest us altogether. The frail body, the inconstant will, the flickering love, the purpose that is wanting in steadfastness. Thou knowest us wholly. Pity us; let the rain of Thy compassion fall upon us; let the light of Thy love be a morning glory around our whole life. Dry our tears when blinded with sorrow: lift from the overburdened back the load that is too heavy to be carried: show us a way out of every perplexity: may virtue, simplicity, and magnanimity, and all the nobler impulses and charity of the heart grow and be exemplified in us and bring abundant glory to God. Make this house Thy sanctuary: tarry with us at our own fireside; speak to us in the solitude of our own seclusion: and at all times and in divers ways, according to Thine own wisdom, feed us, nourish us, and abundantly sustain our souls.

*"Son of God, to Thee I cry;
By the wondrous mystery
Of Thy dwelling here on earth,
By Thy pure and holy birth,
Lord, Thy presence let me see,
Manifest Thyself to me.*

*"Lamb of God, to Thee I cry;
By Thy bitter agony,
By Thy pangs, to us unknown,
By Thy Spirit's parting groan,
Lord, Thy presence let me see,
Manifest Thyself to me."*

Amen.

CXX.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM cxviii. 21-29.]

LOVING GOD, Thou art patient beyond all we know of motherliness: Thy mercy endureth for ever: Thou dost not cut off the children of men as Thou mightest do on account of sin. The Lord is very pitiful and kind; yea, kind to the unthankful and to the evil, wasting His rain upon the sand and upon the rock. Yet Thou doest all things well: we shall not die for want of love; no man shall say to Thee, It was God's love that lacked, not mine. Thou art the God of love; yea, we say with our whole heart, God is love. Because Thy compassions fail not we continue to live, and because Thy mercies are new every morning we cannot yield to despair. Behold the goodness and the severity of God: yea, Thou dost burn as an oven; Thou dost sit as a refiner of silver, Thou dost watch the furnace, and we cannot tell which is the suffering iron and which is the burning fire, but Thou knowest; Thou wilt lose nothing in the furnace: help us to bear its burning, knowing that it is for our good. Thou knowest the mystery of this nature, how much must be burned out of it; Thou knowest sin as we cannot know it, and how only blood can cleanse the fatal stain. We leave ourselves in Thy hands, O Thou who didst see the Cross in eternity, O Thou who didst die for the sinner before the sinner was born: we worship the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Pity us all day, take care of us all night, help us to carry the load steadily, fix the constancy of our heart in God's truth and Christ's Cross; and when all the tale of life is told we shall say, How good has been the Lord, how infinite the grace of Christ.

*"O! to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be:
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.*

*"Prone to wander; Lord, I feel it;
Prone to leave the God I love;
Take my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it from Thy courts above."*

Amen.

CXXI.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xxvii.]

*"Now thank we all our God,
With heart, and hands, and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath bless'd us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours to-day.*

*"O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace,
And guide us when perplex'd,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next."*

LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, we thank Thee for all Thy love. It is round about us, within us, beyond us like a welcome to still larger life. God is love. Why should we be afraid? God is light. Why should we be in despair? All heaven tells of Thy greatness; all the earth shows the patience and tenderness of Thy care. Thou openest Thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. Blessed Saviour, if Thou wilt company with us all the day, and abide with us all the night, we shall truly enjoy the peace of heaven. For this companionship we now humbly pray at the Cross. Help us to carry the daily load and bear the daily pain, and receive out of the daily cloud the fertilising rain. We lovingly pray for one another. We pray for all who are in circumstances similar to our own. May all parents have joy in their children. May all children gladden the hearts of their parents. May all employers and servants live together in mutual esteem. May the old be young in hope. Some whom Thou lovest are sick, and for them we pray the healing of Thy presence. In all our prayers we would cry mightily unto Thee for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Lord of mercy, hear us in all these things, and fulfil the desire of them that fear Thee.

Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church and in the household by Christ Jesus throughout all ages. *Amen.*

CXXII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : LUKE ix. 28-36.]

O LORD, be gracious unto us ; we have waited for Thee ; be Thou our arm every morning, our salvation also in the time of trouble. Unto Thee have we cried, O Lord, and in the morning shall our prayer prevent Thee. In the darkness Thou hast been as a light round about us. Thou hast caused our eyelids to be closed in sleep and our whole nature to be refreshed by the slumbers of the night. Our renewed strength is a renewed responsibility. Thou dost not give us our strength that we may work for ourselves, but that we may be a blessing unto others. Cause us to hear Thy lovingkindness in the morning, for in Thee do we trust ; cause us to know the way wherein we should walk, for we lift up our souls unto Thee. Keep us this day without sin. May business be unstained by selfishness. May suffering be borne with saintly patience. May temptation be answered in the spirit and strength of Christ. The Lord hear us in these our prayers, and grant us answers of peace. Hear us in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and when Thou hearest, Lord, forgive.

We pray Thee to hear the prayers of those who are near and dear to us, and to answer the supplications of hearts that diligently seek Thy throne. When evil cometh upon the land as a sword, judgment, or famine, then do Thou hear and help. When from the ends of the earth men cry unto Thee because their heart is overwhelmed within them, lead them to the rock that is higher than themselves. Thou hast heard the voice that has issued from the low dungeon, and Thou hast not turned away Thine ear from the prayer that has sought Thee in the tempest. Listen to the whispers of weakness in the sick chamber. Interpret the looks of pain and need for which there are no words. With Thine own hand dry the tears which no other hand can touch. *Amen.*

CXXIII.]

[Scripture Reading: PHILIPPIANS 1. 12-30.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou art full of goodness ; Thy tender mercies are over all Thy works. The morning doth praise Thee, and the evening doth attest Thy faithfulness ; all day long Thou dost permit Thy children to walk with Thee and talk with Thee, and renew their life by diligently waiting at the Cross. We rejoice that Thy hands are ever open unto us in token of fatherliness, care, and joyous welcome of love. Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing ; above all Thou dost send forth Thy Spirit, and satisfy the desire of every living heart, so that souls may live upon God, so that spirits may draw nigh to the fountain and have their thirst quenched, so that our innermost life may be nourished by the springs eternal. We know that Thy judgments are often abroad in the earth ; we have deserved them because we have provoked them one and all ; we have done the things that we ought not to have done, and we are guilty before the Lord. Thou hast no fire too hot for our wickedness. Yet behold us not in our wicked estate lest we perish from off the earth, but regard us as we now bow before the Cross, confessing our sins, seeking Thy pardon through the blood of the Lamb. The blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son cleanseth from all sin ; every day we come to the open fountain, every day we cry, God be merciful unto us sinners. Help us, guide us, defend us, in the day of storm and distress. Lord hear us ; we pray at the Cross.

*" Jesu, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high !
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past ;
Safe into the haven guide ;
O receive my soul at last !*

*" Other refuge have I none ;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee ;
Leave, ah ! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me !
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring :
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing !"*

Amen.

CXXIV.]

[*Scripture Reading*: ROMANS V. I-III.]

ETERNAL FATHER, to whom all souls belong, and to whom all souls must give an account, we rejoice before Thee because there has not failed aught of which the Lord has promised unto His people. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations, Thy word is settled in heaven. We rejoice and are exceeding glad that we have not followed cunningly-devised fables; and that we have been made eye-witnesses of the goodness of the Lord. It is our joy to know that God is faithful, by whom we were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. We bless Thee for the witness of Thy Spirit that, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we have been made members of Thy household. Thou hast enabled us to put far away all false confidences and all vain boastings; so that by Thy grace ruling in our hearts we are able to say: Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God.

Wherein we have trusted to ourselves, either for wisdom or strength, we would now confess our sins and humbly seek Thy pardon. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee. May we remember that the Lord our God requireth that we do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God. This day we would magnify Thee; we would test all Thy largest promises; we would commit our souls unto the Lord with all the fulness of deepest love. Hear our prayer for those who need Thy help. Guide the perplexed; find a path in the wilderness for those whose way is hid. Whisper some message of love and tenderness to those who are overborne in the stress and trial of life.

The Lord make us to increase and abound in love one toward another, to the end that He may stablish our hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

CXXV.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM XXV. 1-11.]

*" Lord, when we bend before Thy throne,
And our confessions pour,
Teach us to feel the sins we own,
And hate what we deplore.*

*" Our broken spirits pitying see,
And penitence impart;
Then let a kindling glance from Thee
Beam hope upon the heart."*

FATHER OF ALL MERCIES and God of all comfort, we open the day by communion with the Spirit of eternity. Comfort us by Thy word, stablish us by Thy grace, direct us by Thy wisdom ; let Thy hand lead us, and Thy right hand hold us evermore. We have been foolish before Thee ; we have done evil with both hands earnestly ; we have wandered far from the sanctuary, and have sought the darkness, that in its concealment we might commit our sin ; but we repent before the Lord, and cry unto our offended Father for mercy and for pardon.

We go forth this day to do our duty ; to carry our burden ; to endure what pain Thou mayest see fit to inflict upon us. Assure us that Thy hand shall lead us, and Thy right hand shall hold us. We are not orphans, but are children of the living God. We can look up to heaven for wisdom, as we can look up to the Cross for pardon ; and we are assured that to our cry for light Thou wilt send the rising of the sun. The very hairs of our head are all numbered. In Thy government there are no accidents, nor can there be any mischance that shows disregard on the part of our Father. In this faith we live, and in this confidence we would conduct all the affairs of life. Our hunger Thou wilt regard as a prayer. Our thirst shall be unto Thee as a cry for deliverance. Yea, all our necessity shall commend us anew to Thy gentle care. Give us plentifully of heavenly bread, and lead us to the river of God, which is full of water ; then shall we be abundantly satisfied, and at eventide we shall say Thy hand has led us, and Thy right hand has held us. *Amen.*

CXXVI.]

[*Scripture Reading* : I THESSALONIANS I.]

*"For mercies countless as the sands,
Which daily I receive
From Jesus, my Redeemer's hands,
My soul, what canst thou give?"*

*"Alas! from such a heart as mine
What can I bring Him forth?
My best is stained and dyed with sin;
My all is nothing worth."*

WE bless Thee, O Lord, for health, for reason, for all the high hope and noble ambition which grow within the circle of the Cross: these are plants of Thine own right-hand planting, and Thou dost water them even when we know not. Nourish us in all godly strength; maintain us in constancy of faith and love; deliver us from appearances, and prevent us from being deceived by our own senses; may we have the great gift of faith, whereby we can turn things to their highest meanings and their divinest uses: thus the dust of the earth shall be precious to us, and all living things shall hint at immortality. We thank Thee for all the wear and tear of life when we are not overborne: sometimes our strength gives way, and then we cannot thank Thee for the stress of life; it is too much, it is severe, it is destructive. Lead on, O loving One, to the eternal consummation, and pity us if at all times we cannot say Amen to our own prayers. We thank Thee for all the vivacity and cheerfulness Thou dost throw into our life, for all gleams of sunlight, for all the joy of friendship, for all the sweetness of home, though that home must be taken down, the roof must be blown off, and the fire must be put out: but still it is now home, and we thank Thee for it as for the beginning and pledge of sanctuary. May there be amongst us a spirit of kinship and trustfulness and appreciation; may all envy, jealousy, bitterness, clamour, and everything evil be done away, utterly taken up and annihilated, and may we live in love, which is the very Spirit of God. At the Cross we bow; at the Cross we give Thee thanks for bodily mercies and for spiritual comforts; at the Cross we renew our tender declarations. *Amen.*

CXXVII.]

[Scripture Reading: ISAIAH xlv. 11-25.]

*"Awake, my soul, in joyful lays,
And sing the great Redeemer's praise;
He justly claims a song from me,
His lovingkindness, O how free!"*

*"He saw me ruined in the fall,
Yet loved me, notwithstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate:
His lovingkindness, O how great!"*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou hast made us, and not we ourselves. We are the work of Thy hands. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. We are a continual study and a perpetual surprise unto ourselves. Often we say, It is strange that a harp of a thousand strings should keep in tune so long. Thou hast given us great strength, and enfeebled us by great weakness. Thou hast fashioned us out of the dust of the earth, yet hast Thou set the seal of divinity upon us. We are ruined, but we are gigantic even in our fall. We say, This is the Lord's doing: there is a trace of His greatness everywhere upon us; we have not yet utterly spoiled the whole signature; there are letters which were made by the finger of God.

Our life is full of mystery, and self-contradiction, and difficulty we cannot account for or explain. Yet we will wait all our appointed time, until our change come. Oh what we shall have to discover, and study, and revel in, when we are unclothed with this body and clothed upon with our house from heaven! Then we shall see Bethlehem, and Nazareth, and Galilee, and all the scenes of the Lord's ministry, and listen again to His discourses, and hear in His voice new tones, and discover in His word deeper meanings, and draw from all His doctrine diviner sustenance; then we shall see the Cross from a right point of view; the light of eternity will be upon it, the benediction of infinite love will settle upon its head; then we shall rejoice anew, and lift up the song unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood; unto Him be glory and honour, time without end. *Amen.*

CXXVIII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xvi.

*“Leader of faithful souls, and Guide
Of all who travel to the sky,
Come, and with us, even us, abide,
Who would on Thee alone rely:
On Thee alone our spirits stay,
While held in life's uneven way.*

*“Strangers and pilgrims here below,
This earth, we know, is not our place:
We hasten through this vale of woe,
And, restless to behold Thy face,
Swift to our heavenly country move,
Our everlasting home above.”*

FATHER of all mercies and God of all grace, Thou hast led us by a way that we knew not, and brought our feet into a large place. We could not tell what thou wouldst do, but we knew that God was love, and therefore that all the way would be full of light and flowers and music, yea, that the way would also have its hard places: yet we said in our hearts, It is well: the Lord reigneth; life is a discipline, a trial, and over it all the Lord rules as Father, Shepherd, King: so the end will be good, reach it when we may, an everlasting habitation, a city not made with hands. Thou dost draw us along the course of life a breath at a time: we know not what Thou art doing until we feel how near heaven we are: we could not tell what was taking place, but the whole air changed, suddenly new fragrances came into it and new tones, then we knew that we were nearing the better land. We look around, and behold, many of our friends have gone on before: they seem to have stolen away in the night-time: we miss them, yet we are going to them; they are no longer here to be touched by our hand, but we can put out our love towards them and feel them now nearer than they ever were. This is Thy way, O Lord, this is the law of Thy school: thus Thou dost gather to Thyself all who have been bought by blood. We thank Thee for sweet companionship on the road of life. Help us to live together in unity, in mutual trust and honour, growing in that sweet and tender confidence which makes earth as near heaven as it may be. *Amen.*

CXXIX.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM cxix. 57-72.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, let Thy teaching come to us in any way that will best effect its gracious purpose. We are Thy scholars, and Thou wilt adapt the lesson to us. Thou dost teach us sometimes by nature, sometimes by providence, and sometimes we are moved by great religious thoughts that lift up our whole life beyond the level of the sun. The school is Thine, and all the lessons and the ways of teaching are Thine: only let the end be such as will satisfy Thee; then shall we each be taught of God.

We pray for enlargement of mind, thought, purpose; ennoble us in the whole region of our affection, desire, and will. Thou didst give the germ, Thou alone canst give all the ministry of growth; Thou didst create the root, because Thou didst mean it to come up in branch, and leaf, and blossom, and fruit. Teach us that it is not enough to have Thy root within us; it must be watered from on high, shone upon by the morning sun, and comforted and nursed by all the ministry of grace; then shall we be as trees of the Lord's right hand planting. We bless Thee if we have any thought of progress in the Divine life. The enemy tempts us downwards towards narrowness and littleness, and ultimate extinction; but the Spirit of the living God calls us higher, to wider regions, to brighter suns, to larger fields: may we hear the music of the call, and answer it with the sacrifice of obedience; then shall our life be rooted in the eternity of God, and nourished by all the grace of Christ.

Be pitiful and kind unto us. We can pray, and, having wrought that miracle in us, Thou wilt not abandon us as though we were incapable and worthless. Thou dost never forsake those who call Thee Father. Help us to be true to the Cross: may we live in its mystery, may we exemplify its love. *Amen.*

CXXX.]

[Scripture Reading: ISAIAH xliii. 1-11.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we cannot count our riches; we need all the pages we have at our disposal on which to write down the compassions, and mercies, and lovingkindnesses of God. Yet we lodge our reproach against Thee as if it were a just accusation; we think more might have been done for us; we cannot tell how it is that gates are shut, and the keys are lost, when we want to make progress along a given direction; we do not know the rod and Him who hath appointed it; we think afflictions either spring out of the dust, or express only the vengeance of God, so foolish are we. Oh that we might have again those hours in which we saw clearly and afar—those experiences which thrilled us like music, and ensoothed us like pitying love. The days will come back again; the Lord is not forgetful of His own; He will not forsake the work of His own hands; the morrow shall be the bright day of our life. In this spirit may we be carried on through all the coming and wasting days, until this little river of time is lost in the ocean of eternity.

We bless Thee that the Cross is the altar at which we may ever pray: it helps our prayers, it assures the answer to our petitions, and the prevalence of our entreaties. By the Cross of Christ we are saved: we cannot tell how, or explain to ourselves in words, but we feel that when we throw ourselves around the Cross with all the fulness and tenacity of love, we are already in heaven. Take care of us all the remainder of our days, and bring us through all cloud, and sorrow, and loss, into the Jerusalem that is above.

*"Jerusalem the glorious!
The joy of the elect!
O dear and future vision
That eager hearts expect;
Ev'n now by faith I see thee:
Ev'n here thy walls discern:
To thee my thoughts are kindled,
And strive, and pant, and yearn.*

*"O mine, O golden Sion!
O lovelier far than gold!
O sweet and blessed country,
Shall I thy joys behold?
In mercy, Jesu, bring us
To that dear land of rest,
Where Thou art with the Father
And Spirit ever blest." Amen.*

CXXXI.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM cxix. 169-176.]

ALmighty God, we rest in Thy love. Whatever occurs to us under Thy providence is meant for our chastening, for the enlargement of our faith, for the completeness of our sanctification. Thou hast done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Thy blessings have surprised us like light; they have come upon us like music at an unexpected time. Thou hast done all things well. Let the Lord work as He will, in the light and in the darkness; at the end He will show that all His purpose has been wise and true and good. Grant unto us the spirit of obedience, the spirit that leaps with joy when Thy command is given, because there is some new duty to be done, some larger sacrifice to be offered, some nobler heroism to be displayed. In all things may we prove ourselves to be faithful unto God, hiding His word in our hearts, diligently obeying His commandments, and walking in the way of His statutes with rejoicing hearts. May we be known as those who consult the Divine will before going out of the door, before walking in unknown paths; and may we have the Spirit of God with us in all thought and deed, and may we live the life of faith in the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Gracious Father, keep us during the remainder of our days, few or many. If the afternoon is to be long, make it quiet and radiant, sober with light, a great, broad calm light, the very poem of life; and if the day must be cut short, quite abruptly, the Lord prepare us for all issues, and may sudden death be sudden glory. Help us all in life's great battle. May we always conquer our spiritual foes, by the grace of God. Keep the young safe in Thy hand, Thou Shepherd of souls. Now have us where we would ever be—hidden in Thy heart of love. *Amen.*

CXXXII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: ACTS xvii. 22-31.]

GRACIOUS GOD, give us to feel that we are Thy children, that we belong to Thy great scheme of wisdom and love, and that if we submit ourselves to Thy care and Thy goodness all shall be well at last; we shall pass over the rough sea and touch the eternal shore. Meanwhile, give us perfect rest in Thy love, enabling us to say in poverty, and weakness, and pain, The explanation will come presently; the light will shine upon the darkest places, and those things we could not understand will all be so many points of light, and so many reasons for new and sweeter music.

Thou hast shown us great and wonderful things in ourselves; we are not what we used to be; Thou hast caused us in Christ Jesus to pass through the mystery of growth, so that we are now men in Christ Jesus who once were mere children in the Lord; we have a wider, stronger grasp of things; we see Thy kingdom more clearly and definitely; we feel the pathos of the Cross of Christ more deeply and sensitively than ever we did before. We begin to see the shape and meaning of life. Thou art building a temple; yea, Thou art making us temples for the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

We pray not only for ourselves, but for others, for the weak and the blind, the poor and the perplexed; for the sick who are nearing their healing; for the little child who is just beginning life's mystery. The Lord look upon us in all our way; now right, now wrong, now in darkness without a break, and now on some hilltop bathed in sunlight, the very meeting-place of the angels. The Lord be gracious to us; pity our littlenesses and our manifold infirmities, and spare us a little longer, that in the grace and power of Christ we may amend the past. *Amen.*

CXXXIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM cii. 11-27.]

ETERNAL ONE, what are our days and years but drops in the one river? They are much to us, they are nothing to Thee. Thou dwellest in the everlasting. From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God. Our mornings come and our nights, but are they not drops in the great shower, and is not the shower itself part of the great ocean of eternity? Yet we are troubled by moments, we look forward to the morrow with distress and fear; we look back and see nothing but a gaunt row of dead days looking reproachfully at us: may we not enter for one moment the sanctuary of eternity and be with Thee whose years are eternal, that from Thy throne we may look down on all the restlessness and folly, all the disappointment and tumult of what we call Time? Thy Son our Saviour was always lifting up our thoughts to higher things; He would not have us distressed: His word was, Fear not, little flock; take no thought for the morrow, saying What shall we eat, or what shall we drink? He said unto us, Doth God care for oxen, and if He care for oxen, how much more will He care for you? Lord, increase our faith. If Thou wilt increase our faith, Thou wilt increase our strength, our insight, our patience. Thou wilt thus take away from us the sting and the weight of fear, and fill us with perfectness of love. These are great gifts we ask, but we ask them of a great Giver; we implore wondrous gifts from Thy hands, but in Thy hands can nothing be found but gifts that are wondrous. Help us to toil faithfully, to watch vigilantly, to obey lovingly, and to accept the law the whole day as the law of heaven; then shall we be wise and true, and when the day is done, yea, life's little day, we shall hear Thy voice, saying, Well done, good and faithful servant. *Amen.*

CXXXIV.]

*" Praise Jehovah ! bow before Him ;
O be joyful ! saints adore Him,
Evermore His deeds proclaim.
He is mighty in creation,
He is good in His salvation,
Ever magnify His Name.*

[*Scripture Reading : PSALM xcvi.*

*" By His providence directed,
We are guided and protected,
We receive our daily bread :
He sustaineth each that liveth,
All that we enjoy He giveth,
From His hand we all are fed."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we join in thanking Thee for all the golden blessings of the past. Looking back upon the days that are gone, there is not one hour vacant ; every moment has upon it the touch of Thy presence, the sign of Thy love, the assurance of Thy nearness : our lap has been filled, our basket has been turned into a garden full of flowers, or into a ruddy orchard alive with precious fruits ; our bed has been soft, and the spirit of sleep has closed our eyelids ; our reason has been continued upon the throne. Blessed be God for His goodness ; yea, praised be His Name for His eternal kindness : we will say with the house of Aaron, His mercy endureth for ever. We thank Thee for all friendships, confidences, all delight in one another. The Lord unite us in one love—the love of our Lord Jesus Christ : this will sanctify every emotion, and lift up every affection to new and larger uses. Save us from narrowness and littleness, and give unto us the spirit of a sound mind, the penetrating spirit, the patient spirit, the quiet, heaven-searching spirit ; then shall we be at peace, tranquil amid tumult, hopeful in the hour of darkness, and in us there shall be already the beginning of heaven.

O Thou Healer of men, look upon all who suffer pain, and are conscious of encroaching disease ; and even upon those who feel that they and old age will soon be one and the same. Bless the young, and keep them young a long time ; may they be full of joy and hope, may their hearts dance with gladness, and the golden cup of youth be filled with the wine of God's joy. *Amen.*

CXXXV.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xxxiv.]

*" O Jesu, be our morning Light,
That we may go forth to the fight
With strength renewed and armour bright."*

*" And when our daily work is o'er,
And sins and weakness we deplore,
Oh, then be Thou our Light once more."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, the world is Thine ; Thou wilt shape it into beauty, Thou wilt bring it into music : man cannot hinder Thee. He fumes in wrath, but still Thy purpose moves on to its perfect completion. The Lord reigneth. All things shall come to beauty, and peace, and harmony. If we will resist Thee, we shall die ; if we fall in with Thy movement we shall go with Thee into duration everlasting, and whilst there is life in heaven there shall be no darkness in our souls. How foolish we have been and ignorant ! We have not looked with the right eyes, or at the right objects, or with the right intention ; we have looked and not seen, we have looked in the earth for heaven, we have looked in the rivers for the stars. We have been wrong, we have done wrong ; all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way ; may we do so no more ; may we know the sweet bitterness of repentance, may we know the conquest that comes of contrition. Say unto us that we cannot live except we die, and show us that all pain, and loss, and sorrow are but parts of the great process that shall end in sanctification.

Help us to carry the burden of life a little longer : grant unto us strength that we may yet utter our holiest and sweetest prayer : deliver us from all evil, lead us not into temptation, try us not beyond our strength ; this we say not because of want of faith in Thy love, but because Jesus told us to say it when we pray. We pray at the Cross, at the one altar, in the one Name, the Name to sinners dear : write it in our hearts, set it before our eyes, enable us to imitate all the example which it typified, and bring us at last over a place called Calvary to a place called Heaven. *Amen.*

CXXXVI.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xxxi.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thy goodness passeth before us day by day. It is the one vision upon which we may depend. We see Thy mercy, Thy pity, and Thy compassion in all the way of our life, beautiful as the dew of the morning, throwing back the very glory of Thy throne. Thou hast beset us behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon us; our downsitting and our uprising Thou hast noticed, and Thou hast given Thine angels charge concerning us: surely Thou dost mean to bring us to a great end; Thou art in our history, working out some wondrous purpose of wisdom and love. We cannot tell what it is: proceed with Thy work, and whatsoever the process may be, may we accept it in the spirit of Thy purpose, saying, God's will be done. We cannot now see the end, for we are of yesterday and know nothing; but if Thou wilt give us faith to trust Thee, all shall be well even now; yea, we shall exceedingly glory in tribulation also. We believe God; we live, and move, and have our being in God; we rest in the Most High: we know Him not unto perfection, neither can we know Him; but we know His love, His nearness, His daily care for everything that concerns our life: it is enough; herein we have perfectness of rest, here we kindle the hope of our life, here we begin to be strong. Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge, and the whole story is one of purpose, love, sacrifice, redemption, sanctification. We bless Thee for all Thy care; we feel that Thou art caring for us, and therefore we can cast our care upon Thee; the burden that would crush us is no weight to Thee; lift it from us awhile, that we may gather our strength again, and watch our every step, lest we falter even to the point of falling. *Amen.*

CXXXVII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: 2 KINGS vi. 15-23.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, open our eyes that we may see. We see nothing as it really is, until thou dost anoint our eyes with eye-salve. Give us the vision of the soul ; help us to see beyond appearances into realities ; especially give us that eye of a pure heart which sees God. If we see our Creator we see His creation ; if we do not see the Maker we cannot see the thing made, in all its meaning and purpose and music. We would first walk with God ; we would hold communion with the Father through the Son by the ministry of the Eternal Spirit ; we would love and therefore know ; we would have the knowing heart, rather than the boastful head : give us that sweetness of soul that knows Thee and cannot help knowing Thee ; that pureness of heart that is its own prayer, a continual incense, a perpetual sigh going out to the heavens, desiring still more and more vision of God.

We humbly beseech Thee, in the Name of Jesus Christ Thy Son our Saviour, that we may be delivered from the burden and the plague of our sin, and be brought into the fellowship of the household of God. Thou canst remove all the past that frightens us, Thou canst send arrows of light into the gathering cloud that looms upon our future, and Thou canst make the present bright as noonday. We therefore come unto Thee in the Name of Jesus ; we look to His flowing blood, we understand its meaning—it was for the sin of man. We pray at the altar of the Cross ; our prayers are nothing but as they are involved in the intercession of the one High Priest. He ever liveth to pray for us ; He gathers up our poor petitions and makes them prayer : into His hands we give the desires of our heart. As for to-morrow, it is not here, it may never come to us, it is near at hand, yet far away : we leave it, with all its sunshine or cloud, we leave it all to God, for from God's eternity it comes. *Amen.*

CXXXVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM cxix. 97-112.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou hast written Thy word so that we can know its meaning, and Thou hast promised unto us the gift of Thy Holy Spirit in answer to the prayer of faith, that we may be able to obey Thy word in our daily life. Our desire becomes stronger and stronger that we may be more like our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. We would follow Christ in all this holy obedience. Enable us to set Christ the Lord continually before us, that we may watch Him, hear Him, and represent Him to the people as we are able to receive from Him a deep and true impression of Himself.

Thou knowest what our life is: struggle and conquest, defeat and hope and fear, all mingled in one experience; Thou hast made life a conflict, a controversy, a daily battle, that we might thus be trained to be sons of God, strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, tender in heart, simple and upright in motive and purpose, and finally meetened for the inheritance of the saints in light. Help us to receive life in this way, to take it as Thy gift, to hold it as a solemn trust, to enjoy all its music and light, and to read into our heart, all the deeper lessons of its sorrow and disappointment. Help us each to carry our own burden, and at the end may we meet one another to rehearse Thy goodness to us in all the way of the wilderness; then shall we see that Thou didst make the crooked places straight, and the rough places plain, though at the time we knew it not, and charged God foolishly.

Hear us in our prayer, send upon us the Holy Ghost, by whose inspiration, energy, and comfort alone we can understand Thy purpose, and realise Thy holy will. Our prayer we pray in the sweet Name of Jesus. *Amen.*

CXXXIX.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM cxlv.

*" Let all men praise the Lord,
In worship lowly bending;
On His most holy word,
Redeemed from woe, depending.
He gracious is and just,
From childhood us doth lead;
On Him we place our trust
And hope, in time of need.*

*" Glory and praise to God,—
To Father, Son, be given,
And to the Holy Ghost,—
On high enthroned in heaven,
Praise to the Triune God;
With powerful arm and strong,
He changeth night to day;
Praise Him with grateful song."*

GREAT IS THE LORD, and greatly to be praised. Our hearts go out towards Him with great desire, for His lovingkindness is infinite. Our eyes are unto the hills for help, and our hearts turn to the Cross for salvation. Spare us; save us, for Thy dear Son's sake, who shed His blood for the cleansing of our guilt.

O LORD, we will praise Thee, and Thy Name we would extol for ever and ever. From eternity Thou hast loved us with all the love of the Cross. Hear us, then, we humbly pray Thee when we sing of salvation, and praise Thee for redeeming grace. Being saved by Christ we would live unto the Saviour in every thought, and word, and deed. Bending before His Cross, and watching all His agony, we would exclaim, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Lord, increase our faith, our patience, and our love. To this end grant us the daily ministry of the Holy Spirit. Spirit of Christ, dwell in us. Spirit of holiness, make us holy.

FATHER, we pray for our own family, and for all other families. We bless Thee for old age, and infancy, for the activities of business, and for the rest of evening life. We give the home, the school, and the market-place to Thy holy keeping. May we see Thee in every sphere of life, and glorify Thee in every experience. Lord, hear us at the Cross, and grant unto us answers of peace.

To the Eternal God, be eternal praise. *Amen.*

CXL.]

[*Scripture Reading*: EXODUS xv. 1-18.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we have come to bless Thee with a new song, for Thy mercies have been renewed in our life day by day. Every hour has brought its own miracle of grace, every moment has seen some fresh display of Thy patience and providential care. Thou hearest the throbbing of our heart, Thou knowest the way that we take; yea, Thou dost beset us behind and before, and upon us is laid Thy gentle, yet mighty hand.

Thou Loving One, who didst die for us and rise again, to lead us to the noblest conquests, let Thy grace abound over our sin, we now penitently and humbly entreat Thee; let the Cross of Christ uplift itself above all our iniquity, giving us the gracious assurance of Thy pardon. Enable us to live our few days in peace and quietness, in zeal for all godliness, in diligent and honest service for Thy kingdom. Seeing that our days are few, and that they are flying whilst we mourn their brevity, may we gird up our loins, doing Thy will with lowly patience and with confident trust.

THE LORD make our house glad; the Lord kindle our fire, and it shall be bright and warm, and shall speak to us of a higher hospitality: make our bed in our affliction; find bread for us where there is none; when all the pools and fountains are dry, set spring water upon our table; we shall know whence it came, we shall say, None can do these miracles but God. Thus in extremity and in joy, in darkness and in light, and in all the variation of the tumultuous mystery which we call life, may we see God, and love Him, and cling to Him, and say at the latter end, He will make all mystery the beginning of new music. *Amen.*

CXLI.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xxiii.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, how good Thou art who can tell? In Thy goodness is our life, and because of Thy mercy is our hope. Our breath is indeed in our nostrils, but our being is made sure by the word of Thy mouth, so that we cannot die, nor can the light of our hope be darkened by all the power of the enemy. Thou dost give us sleep by which our strength is renewed, and bread by which the life of the body is fed. Thy mercy is as a great sea; and Thine omnipotence as the high and wide heavens; and all Thou art is ours if we be in Christ. Yet is there a shadow upon our life, and in our heart is there a pain; truly that shadow comes of our sin, and that pain is sent as an affliction from God. But Christ is our hope; His blood will make our hearts clean. We cling to Christ; we hold Him by all that is mightiest in our love; we cannot, will not, let Him go, because He only is our strength and our salvation. Be Thou the light of our short and dark day upon the earth: go down with us to the grave, and when we see how deep the pit is into which this body must fall, show us also how high the heaven is into which the soul must ascend through the might and grace of Christ Jesus. Keep our thoughts and our steps the whole way of our strange and solemn life. Bless us every one, the old and the young, the strong and the weak, the brave and the faint-hearted. We fall into Thy good hands, so gentle, so mighty, and there we would for ever rest, blessing Thee for Thy dear Son, our infinite and eternal Saviour.

*"Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah!
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
Hold me with Thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven!
Feed me till I want no more.*

*"Open Thou the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong Deliverer!
Be Thou still my strength and shield."*

Amen.

CXLII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : JOHN viii. 12-20.]

GRACIOUS LORD, Thou art our Father in heaven, wise and gentle, patient and tender over all the works of Thine hands. God is love; Thy mercy endureth for ever: grant unto us a sense of Thy nearness as of Thy goodness, that we may know that Thou art a God nigh at hand, and not afar off. How far have we put Thee away by our unbelief and our unthankfulness! whereas Thou mightest have been on our right hand night and day, an ever-present help in trouble. We have reasoned Thee out of our lives too much; and have not thought of Thee as being in us, and round about us, nor have we known that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, that our tears are put into God's bottle: these things we have forgotten, and therefore oftentimes we have been unhappy, unfruitful in works of righteousness, and our minds have become an easy prey to all manner of temptation. May the time past more than suffice, and henceforward may we endeavour to realise the near presence of our Father, that we may be able to say we live and move and have our being in God. Thus shall we be as Thy Son was in the world; whilst He was on earth He was in heaven, and the angels were about Him ministering as watchful servants.

What we know of Thee we know through Thy Son Jesus Christ. He is our Saviour and Lord and King; He died for us, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God: and this is the confidence we have in Thee, that if we ask anything in the all-prevailing Name of Jesus Christ Thy Son, we shall receive it; we ask for larger faith, deeper and truer love, and we pray above all things that Thy Holy Spirit may abide with us. The Lord answer our prayer, having first purified it and magnified it by His own grace, then shall we sing a new song of mercy and judgment. *Amen.*

CXLIII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM CXV.

*"When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.*

*"O how shall words with equal warmth
The gratitude declare,
That glows within my thankful heart?
But Thou canst read it there."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, if new mercies demand new songs, where shall our praise begin? where shall our hallelujah end? Thou dost load us with mercies; we find them everywhere, along every line of life; they are the hope of the soul, they are the security of the understanding and of the whole man: because Thy mercies fail not our life is not perished in death. Sustain us well by Thy tender grace; in the infinite bounty of Thy mercy uphold us; give soothing, succour, inspiration, all we need; for the stress is great, and the enemy is very strong. But Thy grace is sufficient for us, we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us; we can set our feet upon the neck of the enemy of God, if God will give us His Holy Spirit. Pity our littlenesses, our infirmities, our vain conceits; as for our sin, whilst we confess it, do Thou lead us to the mystery of the sacrifice of Christ, and show us that the blood of Thy Son cleanseth from all sin. Set a light in our dwelling. Defend our habitation. Surround us as with watching angels; and may we know that our downsitteing, our uprising, our going out and our coming in are regarded in heaven. May this day be a new opportunity for doing good, and may we avail ourselves of it with eagerness and thankfulness. What we pray for ourselves we pray for others, that they too may be bound up in the bundle of life, and that they too, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, may find an abundant entrance into Thy heavenly kingdom. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Lord Jesus, in the plentifulness of Thy great mercy, help us and save us, we humbly beseech Thee. *Amen.*

CXLIV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM lxxi. 12-24.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we put our whole life into Thy keeping day by day. We know not when its last breathing shall be ; help us, therefore, to be diligent, with all care and filial anxiety to do that which is right in Thy sight, and to make the most of our day and generation. Deliver us from the torment of fear, save us from the bitterness of despondency, create in us that happiness, that overflowing joyousness that comes of complete trust in God. May we not give way to the temptation of the evil one, may our fears never multiply themselves against us to the extinction of our hope, and in the darkest night may we see some distant and trembling star, and in the coldest winter may there come upon us some gleam of light that shall tell of the summer that is yet to dawn.

According to our individual necessities, let Thy mercy come to us this day. Thou hast given us bread to eat ; Thou hast sheltered us from the darkness and the storm ; Thou hast given unto us rest in sleep, and the renewal of strength therein ; Thou hast preserved unto us the love of friends, and the joy of life ; for all these, Thy mercies, we bless Thee with a rising gratitude, and praise Thee with a full heart. Thou knowest the desires of each heart ; the prayers we cannot utter ; Thou understandest the thoughts for which there is no language. We ask Thee now to come near to each one of us, to see our need and to supply our want out of the fulness of Thy great grace.

We praise Thee for the blessings of home ; for the care of the little ones ; for all the light that has made the house glad. Keep our hearts and minds in the love of Christ. May we live the noble life, and breathe the ever-enlarging prayer, and realise the ever-gracious blessing of our Father's presence. *Amen.*

CXLV.]

[Scripture Reading: REVELATION V.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we wish to see the invisible, we wish to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. We wish to fix our eyes upon the invisible things of God; we desire to look into them. We are dissatisfied with time and space and sense as known unto us now, and we are filled with a desire to know Thee more closely, to love Thee more tenderly, and to serve Thee more steadfastly. Surely, then, this prayer is Thine and not ours only, and if Thou dost give the prayer Thou wilt give the answer—yea, the prayer and the answer are one. Help us to believe that we do see Thee. Then shall our eyes be filled with a great light, and in our soul there shall be unspeakable peace. We thank Thee for every word that helps us out of our present littleness and shows us the great things yet to be disclosed and enjoyed. May we live in the spirit of faith; may we walk in the light of hope; may we declare plainly that we seek a country out of sight; may we never be ashamed of our pilgrim lot, but, taking our staff and binding on our sandals, may we go steadfastly forward, looking towards the light and hoping constantly in God. May all our days be spent in thankfulness, in determination, by Thy grace, to be nobler in character, in temper, and in charity; then shall age bring no infirmity of the soul, and growing time shall mean approaching eternity, in which we shall live for ever before Thee in perfectness of strength and completeness of character. God be merciful unto us and to all for whom we ought to pray, granting unto us exceeding comfort, which shall minister to our growth and stimulus in the Divine life. Pardon all our sins. Wash us in the holy blood; cleanse us by Thine own power and grace, Thou Holy One; and, when we have served Thee a little longer, may we be called to the service of heaven. *Amen.*

CXLVI.]

[Scripture Reading: JOB xxxiii. 1-30.]

ALmighty GOD, we are safe in Thy hands. Truly, in Thy hands is power, in Thy hands also is mercy. Thy mercy endureth for ever. Thy tears are as a fountain, and Thy pity as a continual stream. In wrath Thou dost remember mercy. Thou callest to mind what we are—a wind that cometh for a little time and then passeth away; a vapour dying whilst it ascends. Thou rememberest that we are but dust. We will think of Thy tender mercy, as well as of Thy chastisement; of increasing strength, as well as of multiplied burdens; we will remember the years of the Most High, and establish ourselves in the infinity of Thy grace. Thou hast not brought us thus far to destroy us: that Thou hast so far conducted us in peace, in safety, in love, is the only pledge we need that all this little earth shall be lost in the light and peace of Thy great heaven. We bless Thee for all Thy goodness: yea, sometimes such is the fulness of our faith that we can kiss the rod and look up unto Him who hath appointed it, and say, The will of the Lord be done. We will no longer number our sins and pile them up into great mountains that darken the face of the whole heaven; we will hasten to the Cross, we will think of the greater grace, as we behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. There shall our rest be; there shall we have oil for the feeding of our lamps; there shall we meet the Lord and speak to Him, as it were, face to face, in tender confidence, in holy confession, and in the reception of the pardon which opens all heaven.

*"Father, hear Thy children's call:
Humbly at Thy feet we fall,
Prodigals, confessing all:
We beseech Thee, hear us.*

*"Christ, beneath Thy Cross of shame,
All our life of sin we blame,
Penitent, we breathe Thy Name:
We beseech Thee, hear us."*

Amen.

CXLVII.]

[Scripture Reading: MARK iv. 30-41.]

*" O Lord, I would delight in Thee,
And on Thy care depend;
To Thee in every trouble flee,
My best, my only Friend.*

*" When all created streams are dried,
Thy fullness is the same;
May I with this be satisfied,
And glory in Thy Name !"*

ALMIGHTY GOD, do Thou have us in Thy holy keeping, which is infinite in strength and in tenderness, because if we take our life into our own hands we spoil it, and our destiny is lost. Since we came out from Thee, to Thee again would we return; we are sparks of Thine own glory; Thou hast loosed us from the eternal light that we might be upon the earth; O keep us evermore attached to the living centre; in Thine own due time may we return from the earth to Thy heavenly places.

We bless Thee for the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, so hospitable in their warmth, so tender in their soothing promises, throwing wide open the very door of heaven, and asking us to go in and receive of the Lord's hand according to all our need. Help us to receive His words with simple faith: may we take them as He spake them from His heart to our hearts, a guide and a benediction to our life upon the earth.

Oh help us to find Thee evermore: may our eyes be in the right direction, may our hearts be stirred by one sovereign and holy purpose, and may our whole course upon the earth have heaven for its outlet and its destiny. We are as men upon a great wild sea, but Christ is in the vessel, and the great chart is there; may we not take the vessel into our own navigation: it is Christ's vessel, to His keeping may we commit all our life. And when we go further and further, give us the assurance that we are in the right direction, how high soever may be the storm, how chilling and saddening soever the moaning of the great sea, and though we be much shattered, may we yet come into the right haven. *Amen.*

CXLVIII.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM xlii.]

ALmighty GOD, our souls long for Thee, for Thou only canst satisfy our hunger and heal our sorrows. We are alone when Thou art absent, but when Thou art near our loneliness is turned into a great and tender joy. That Thou mayest be near to us evermore is our heart's highest desire. We will speak aloud of Thy goodness, for it is rich and continual: and we will tell of Thy mercy, for it is tender beyond all other pity. We cannot speak of ourselves as other than unworthy. We are indeed witnesses against ourselves. Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us. Father of our souls, wash us in the precious and all-cleansing blood of Christ.

Behold, Thou dost work a daily miracle in our daily preservation, yea, Thou dost create us again in every breath we draw. Our life is hidden from us so that we cannot see it; it is in us, but we may not look upon it; it throbs in our heart, but it may not be touched by our hand. How can we redeem it, or how can we save it from death? Truly, salvation is of the Lord alone, and the redemption of our life is the work of the Most High. Unto Him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, unto Him be glory evermore.

Giver of all good, give us what we need day by day while life shall last. Make our habitation as one of Thy sanctuaries; turn our tears into unexpected joy; make us the better for our afflictions and richer for our losses; hide Thy secret in our heart that we may have bread to eat that the world knoweth not of, and pour Thy blessing upon our whole life. O Lord, hear us. Blessed One, let our prayer come back again in sweet replies of love. Father of all grace, Everlasting Son of God, Holy Ghost the Comforter, save us now and save us evermore. *Amen.*

CXLIX.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM cxix. 129-136.]

*" Lord, I have made Thy word my choice,
My lasting heritage;
There shall my noblest powers rejoice,
My warmest thoughts engage.*

*" I'll read the histories of Thy love,
And keep Thy laws in sight;
While through the promises I rove,
With ever fresh delight."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we bless Thee that Thy word grows upon us: it is sown in our love as one seed, and behold it grows up into a great harvest. Thou dost give unto us precious promises that never cease to sing their sweet music to our drooping hearts and to lure us from dreary places up to the high and noble heights of Thy sanctuary and temple. Give us to see some view of truth we have not yet beheld: charm us by some new revelation: and to the mercies of yesterday do Thou add a blessing peculiar to this hour—for Thou dost give more and more: yea, even grace upon grace, abundance upon abundance, until Thou dost teach us by the overflow and surplus of Thy great gifts what is meant by unsearchable riches. We would grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: thus would we escape all the narrowness of time, and thus, whilst we are yet on earth, would we enjoy and realise the happy citizenship of heaven.

For Christ Jesus the Saviour we bless Thee. He died, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. He Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree, and He will yet bring to us larger revelations, and shed upon us wider and brighter lights, and draw us forward to progress beyond all we have yet conceived. Keep us in the love of the truth: may we walk all our days in the fear of God, and in simplicity, and meekness, and humbleness of mind. Do Thou bring down all that is haughty to the dust: do Thou raise up all our best aspirations and purest desires, until they shall become acceptable prayer, and until they shall then be answered in great benedictions from heaven. *Amen.*

CL.]

[*Scripture Reading*: EPHESIANS iii. 14-21.]

ALmighty God, we would be members of Thy household, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; we would be members of one family, we would assemble ourselves before God in one Name, and would humbly pray that we may evermore, by the mighty power of God the Holy Ghost, be obedient unto the will of Heaven. This is Thy thought concerning us; Thou wouldst have us obey Thee because Thou art right, eternally right, and we can only be right as we serve Thee, and know Thee, and love Thee with our whole heart. Take us out of ourselves, and help us to fix our whole attention and love upon the Cross of Christ. For that Cross we daily bless Thee; it is the only way to pardon, purity, and peace. With Christ Thou wilt also freely give us all things: all things are in His pierced hand; He is lifted up on high that He may give gifts unto men. We will not say what we want, lest we err in our prayer before God: we will say, Take not Thy Holy Spirit from us; give us that which is good for us, whether it be bitter or sweet; not our will, but Thine, be done. Thou knowest what our ignorance would say, and what our selfishness would plead for, but we will not open our mouth other than to say, God's holy will be done. We may ask to grow in grace, and to increase in wisdom, and to become purer before the eyes of Heaven; all this we ask for, because all this is promised. Open Thine hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing; we are all guests at Thy table: every life is Thine, the greatest and the smallest; there is nothing great to Thee; to Thee there is nothing small; Thou fillest the heavens and the heaven of heavens: yet Thou wilt come into the broken heart and reign in the contrite spirit as King of grace and King of glory. Come, Thou, whose right it is, and never go away. *Amen.*

CLI.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM lxii.

*" Approach, my soul, the mercy-seat,
Where Jesus answers prayer ;
There humbly fall before His feet,
For none can perish there.*

*" Thy promise is my only plea ;
With this I venture nigh ;
Thou callest burdened souls to Thee,
And such, O Lord, am I."*

ALmighty GOD, we approach Thee in Thine own appointed way, and we know that Thou wilt be more gracious to hear than we can be willing to pray ; Thine answer is greater than our request, as Thy grace is greater than our sin. He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich. Through death we have life, through blood we have cleansing and forgiveness.

Behold Thou dost work by Thine own way, and none can search Thee ; we cannot find Thee out unto perfection. We will therefore trust Thee, resting in Thee with unquestioning love, casting all our care upon Him who is mighty to save. Thou hast beset us behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon us. Thou hast measured out unto us our food, and Thou hast kept for us a place of rest, and Thou hast not withheld the blessing of sleep. The light has been the brighter for Thy presence, and the darkness has rested upon us, not as a fear, but as a benediction, because of Thy tender care. Gathered in Thy presence, our hearts glow with ardent love, and our mouth is opened in thanksgiving which we breathe unto the heavens because we must praise the hand from which our blessings come.

Gracious God, look upon us and bless us each and all ; bless the old and the young ; bless all little children ; take them into Thy special keeping. The Lord help us to carry our daily load as if it contained the promise of blessing. God's peace be multiplied unto us ; God's grace be added to our lives, until we know not the pain or weariness of necessity. *Amen.*

CLII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: I PETER ii. 1-10.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou hast been patient with us; we are spared until this moment in health and strength, and are surrounded with comforts needful for this life, and blessed with opportunities for preparing for the life that is to come. We will think of the Lord's patience, not that we may trifle with it, but that we may be moved to deeper love and higher thankfulness. When there was no eye to pity, when there was no arm to save, Thine own eye pitied, and Thine own arm brought salvation. The Lord will be patient with us, the creatures of His hand, and will not spurn us from Him when we come to pray. Not because of what we are, but because of what God is, may we come with confidence, yea, even with boldness, to the throne of the heavenly grace.

We repose in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, resting in Him with perfect sense of security. If we look to the time that is gone we see innumerable witnesses of God's tender mercy; if we look at ourselves at this moment we have more reason for thankfulness than for complaint; if we look to the time that is coming we may do so with reverent joy because the promises of God are exceeding many and exceeding precious. Why should our soul be disquieted within us? Why should we be subject to such anxieties as they know who have no faith and no hope? Lord God Almighty, help us to magnify Thy grace by a spirit of contentment and a spirit of cheerfulness. We would no longer be sad or dejected, no more would we live as if in a dark cloud; we would walk as children of the morning, children of the light and of the noonday, whose confidence is in God's eternal mercy, and whose expectation is only from the Cross. Help us to rest in Christ, to cling to Him, to fix our eyes upon the one Priest of the universe, and out of His intercession may we receive answers to our prayers. *Amen.*

CLIII.]

[Scripture Reading: ROMANS vi.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we are Thy children. Thou knowest us altogether, and Thou wilt judge us in love. Thou knowest the influences that have made us and unmade us, the unholy legacies we have lived to take up, and the blessed advantages we have been enabled to enjoy. Out of all these intermixtures we are what we are : sometimes blind and deaf and dumb : every vow broken, every sweet memory turned into sourness ; and sometimes we are full of sacred impulse, our souls are all but winged, we can almost fly to heaven's gate and hover above the entrance to the skies. We are not altogether good, nor are we altogether bad : we are torn and rent asunder ; we cannot calculate the course of one day, and having begun a prayer we cannot tell how it may end. The Lord pity us ; the tender Mother-God lift us into His infinite arms and nurse us awhile : it shall be like a new birth, a resurrection, a blessed restoration.

We have done the things we ought not to have done. God be merciful unto us sinners : love us because we are sinners. Thou hast done this : while we were yet sinners Christ died for us ; and our sin, somehow, in the great sweet mystery of grace, endears us to Thee when we repent of it, and at least try to abandon it. Oh ! with what emotion dost Thou look upon us when we try to rend the chain which binds us to that which is evil ! The Lord give us more than a giant's power ; the Lord send twelve legions of angels to help us in this marvellous act of emancipation. Help us to struggle well : may we continue the battle, assured that God is with us of a truth. A few more days, and the fight will cease ; another hill to climb, and then the fair land will be seen in all its early beauty ; a few more tears and disappointments, and then shall come the dawn, the dawn of heaven—and there is no night there. *Amen.*

CLIV.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM cxxi.

*"The Lord my Shepherd is,
And He my soul will keep;
He knoweth who are His,
And watcheth o'er His sheep.
Away with every anxious fear;
I cannot want while He is near.*

*"He leads, Himself, the way
His faithful flock should take:
Them who His voice obey,
His love will ne'er forsake;
For He has pledged His holy Name;
He who for ever is the same"*

ALmighty GOD, we bless Thee for all Thy patience, care, oversight, and tender love. In the daytime Thou art before us as an advancing cloud, and at night as a pillar of fire going in front of us to show our ignorance the way. Thou dost spread our table morning, noon, and night: Thou dost comfort us with exceeding solaces of grace: Thy promises are great and precious promises, covering all time, throwing a light upon the grave, stretching over the last dark river, and uniting us with the very heaven of God.

We bless Thee that we know Jesus Christ: His word makes all other speech beautiful. We rejoice that we have seen His Cross and forgotten our sin in the great vision. Teach us that by Christ comes grace, that by grace we have righteousness, and that through righteousness we have heaven. Help us whilst we live to live well, make us covetous of the hours: may they be to us more than golden, may every moment be an opportunity for becoming wiser and better, or for doing some deed of charity. The Lord give us insight into His blessed truth: may Thy Book be a revelation to us, the chief guest in our house, yea, the light and the joy and the music of our dwelling, the man of our counsel, the companion of our solitude; by night may it shine like a star, and by day fill the heaven with glory.

We pray our prayer in the sweet Name of Jesus, the Name to sinners dear, our only and infinite Saviour, who loved us, and gave Himself for us, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us. For His sake Thou wilt hear; for His sake Thou wilt reply. *Amen.*

CLV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : GENESIS i. 1-19.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, the light is Thine which makes the common day. May a light above the brightness of the sun shine into our hearts, and give us to feel somewhat of the glory of heaven ! All light is Thine : God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. We would be children of the light ; we would walk in the day ; we would avoid that which is dark and stand in the midst of the light of God. But who can do this ? Surely it is not in us so to do. We must be born again. O Thou to whom alone this miracle is possible, may we know the power of regeneration, the wonder of the new birth, the delight and security of adoption into the family of God. May we know the mystery of pardon through sacrifice, and find the only way to heaven's rest through the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for these emotions and upliftings of heart. They do us good : they draw us away from the narrow prison of time and sense, and lift us into the liberty of larger spaces and brighter hopes. May these aspirations grow in their sacred power over us until we be lifted up and fixed in the sanctuary of God. We thank Thee for all Thy mercies : so tender, so many ; coming before the morning light, outstaying all the lingering stars ; always with us, blessed be Thy holy Name ! We live in mercy ; we stand in eternal grace.

Thou who ridest above the clouds in the chariot of the sun, dissolve the shadows, chase them away, and give us doxologies and hallelujahs. Be with all our loved ones at home and abroad. We are yearning towards one another, stretching out invisible hands of the heart across lands, and deserts, and seas. We bless Thee for all this ; for, being interpreted in Christ Jesus, it means heaven, fellowship eternal, union without dissolution. *Amen.*

CLVI.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN XIX. 1-18.]

OUR FATHER which art in heaven, if Thou wilt hear us then surely Thou wilt answer us; Thy hearing is an answer. We speak at the Cross; there is no other altar where we can see the sufficiency of God, the need of pardon, the fulness of grace. We bow before the Cross, the mystery of love, the mystery of law; a great wonder, an ineffable benediction. Our souls are melted by the appalling sight. We look upon the dying Son of God and say, He was delivered for our offences; He bare the sin of many; He took away the sin of the world. All this we cannot understand, but we feel it, and we answer it with our love. We love the Saviour; though we grieve Him every day, yet still we come to Him to tell Him of our sin, and seek with broken hearts the renewed assurance of His pardon. Thou art training us. This poor world is not all; this is but the beginning, the cloudy dawn; the infinite light has yet to come, and by the power of the grace and the Cross of Christ we shall live to see it and enjoy all its blessedness.

For all Thy goodness we thank Thee; Thy hand has been bountiful; Thy thought towards Thy children has been large. If they have sinned Thou hast not hidden Thyself from them, still by the way of Thy Cross they could find Thee and be again assured of Thy love. Let every good man this day be made stronger and better; let every bad man have his badness destroyed, and his soul saved through the infinite power of the priesthood of the Son of God. May the Holy Ghost, Divine Comforter, be shed abroad upon all hearts, upon all homes; may He come with awakening, reviving, sanctifying, inspiring power, and may our answer to Him be in larger life and tenderer love. *Amen.*

CLVII.]

[Scripture Reading : 2 SAMUEL vii. 18-29.]

*" Lord, as a family we meet,
Thy goodness to proclaim ;
We wait before Thy mercy-seat,
And plead the Saviour's Name.*

*" Weary and faint, by cares oppressed,
We still are travelling on
To that bright land of peace and rest,
Where our Forerunner's gone."*

MOST MERCIFUL GOD, we thank Thee for the night and for the morning as for the rest and the hope of life. We love Thee because Thou didst first love us, and if we show our love by seeking more of Thine it is because Thou art working graciously and mightily in our hearts. This hunger for Thy love is the proof that we are not forsaken of God. When we see Thee in our lives our hearts are made glad with true joy. Help us to leave ourselves always in Thy hands. We pray Thee to be gracious unto us this day with exceeding favour. May we have no doubt as to the course we ought to take. Fill us with the Spirit of Christ our only Saviour. May His meekness rule our temper, and may His self-sacrifice inspire our benevolence. May we not lose heart in the midst of difficulties, but in the strength of Thy grace may we encounter and subdue them all. We bless Thee that it is possible to be in the world and yet not of it : to be breathing the atmosphere of this lower clime, and yet to be walking as citizens of the New Jerusalem : contradictions to the world and to those who have not the spirit and the secret resources upon which our souls do live. Enable us evermore to be constant to Thy throne, and to do all Thy will with patience and with joyfulness.

In tender love we pray for one another. God bless us every one. Fill the house with light. Include in Thy blessing all for whom we ought to pray : all friends, old and young, all little children, all who are in trial and affliction, all who are nearing the better land. Our Father, bless us, because we trust in Jesus, and evermore flee to His Cross for all we need. *Amen.*

CLVIII.]

[Scripture Reading : Exodus iii. 11-15.]

*" Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night!
Day-spring from on high, be near!
Day-star, in my heart appear !*

*" Dark and cheerless is the morn
Unaccompanied by Thee ;
Joyless is the day's return,
Till Thy mercy's beams I see ;
Till they inward light impart,
Glad my eyes, and warm my heart."*

WE thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for all the security, and peace, and joy of household life. Thou hast built our home for us, and filled it with Thy light as with a blessing. Here shall Thine altar be set up, and here shall Thy Name be praised. We have nothing that we have not received. We are fed by the hand of the Lord, and daily nourished by the bounty of the Most High. May our right hand forget her cunning, and our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth, if we forget our Father and Saviour. Lord, turn not away from our praise, nor discourage the hearts that bring their offering of love.

We come, Father of our spirits, to ask Thee to receive our thanksgiving and answer the voice of our supplication. We come by the appointed way. Behold us gathered in spirit around the Saviour's Cross, and pity us with all Thy compassion. God be merciful unto us, sinners. Hear the confessions that cannot be spoken, and dry the hidden tears of the heart. Give hope to all who are sad, and joy of spirit more and more to all who delight in Thy law. As for the work which lies before us, it will be easy if Thy grace fill our hearts. Show us the silver lining in every cloud, and take away all our fear. We pray for others as well as for ourselves; for hearts that are in trouble, for friends appointed to die, for men whose work is too heavy for their strength, and for those who do not pray for themselves. Go after that which is lost, and find it. Bring wanderers home. Subdue the hardest heart, and thus, O Son of God our Saviour, continue and complete the miracle of the Cross. *Amen.*

CLIX.]

[*Scripture Reading* : JEREMIAH xvii. 5-14.]

GRACIOUS FATHER, according to our necessity do Thou come to us. Touch each one of us with a beam of light from heaven. Thou knowest us altogether : our difficulties, temptations, temperaments. Thou knowest all that is in us and about us ; be Thou the God of each life, the Saviour of each heart.

We mourn our sin : it is our daily cry ; we have done the things we ought not to have done, we have left undone the things that we ought to have done. The Lord's mercy be multiplied unto us, and all the ministry of Christ be sent to our aid. Let us each one hear the utterance of Thy forgiving love ; let the burdened conscience be delivered from its load ; let the wounded heart be healed, and may there pass over us the assurance of Thy pardon, and may there return upon our life the lifting up of the light of Thy countenance.

We praise Thee for all Thy blessings. They are in our individual life, for Thou hast continued unto us health and strength ; Thou hast given unto us love and hope. Thou hast blessed us in basket and in store ; Thou hast given us shelter from the storm. Thou hast saved us from many a temptation, and delivered us from many a snare. We humbly beseech Thee to continue unto us all Thy mercies, and may there be no vacant chair, no empty heart, no desolated spirit.

Lord, pity us from the very fountain of Thy heart, and may we know that our life is the object of Thy compassion ; and with all mercifulness do Thou look upon us as those whose days are as a shadow. In the Cross of Thy Son our infinite Saviour, may we see how great we are in Thy purpose. Help us to avail ourselves of His loving ministry : in all our sin and sorrow, in all our daily vexation and passing trouble, may we enter into His heart as into a sanctuary which cannot be violated. *Amen.*

CLX.]

[Scripture Reading: REVELATION vii. 9-15.]

*"O holy, holy, holy Lord;
Thou God of Hosts, by all adored;
Earth and the heavens are full of Thee,
Thy light, Thy power, Thy majesty.*

*"Apostles, join the glorious throng,
And swell the loud triumphant song:
Prophets and martyrs hear the sound,
And spread the hallelujah round."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, may we take part in the great acclaim in honour of Thy Son, who shed His blood for men, and is now seated as our Priest on the mediatorial throne. We think of those who are now strangers to this great Hallelujah, and our heart's longing, our infinite desire is that they too may be brought in to take their share in the praise which is due to Him who ransomed us with His own blood.

Once we took no part in the praises that are Thine, O Christ; we cared not for Thy Cross; we knew not the music of Thy Name, we were strangers to Thee, and Thou wast the greatest stranger of all to us. All we like sheep had gone astray, we had turned every one to his own way. But Thou didst come to seek and to save the lost; Thou didst pay for us the price of Thy blood; Thou didst ascend Calvary and become attached to the accursed tree in holy sacrifice for us, and now by Thy precious blood are we redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the very life-stream of Thy heart, Thou triumphant Christ. And if we are moved to high passion and kindled with unquenchable ardour of love, behold our devotion falls infinitely short of Thine, our poor passion dies before the infinite vehemence of Thy love.

If Thy blessing be with us we shall be as a bush burning but not consumed. If Thou dost enkindle Thy fire in our hearts, there shall go up an incense and a savour precious unto Thyself. Withhold not Thy blessing; let Thy Spirit come down upon us, either as the rushing mighty wind from heaven or as the gentle and the noiseless dew; withhold Him not, we humbly beseech Thee. *Amen.*

CLXI.]

[*Scripture Reading* : HEBREWS xiii. 5-15.]

ALmighty GOD, once we loved to walk in darkness, but we bless Thee that Thou hast called us into Thy marvellous light. Through the Cross and sacrifice of our dearly-beloved and only Saviour, Thou hast delivered us from darkness and despair. Wherein we have forgotten these marvels of Thy grace, do Thou now revive their tenderest recollection, so that our hearts may bless Thee with a new delight, and with ennobled infinite hope.

We come always to Jesus, because He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever : always full of love, full of pity, full of thought for our whole life. He died for us and rose again ; He is our Saviour, and He is our Intercessor ; for us He shed His blood, for us He breathed away His heart in prayer. We have no other Saviour ; we need no other. His blood is our answer to Thy law, His Cross the sanctuary of our guilty souls.

We put our lives into Thy hands : we would not take care of ourselves, or surely our protection would be vanity. We ask Thee to take us, body, soul, and spirit, into Thine own keeping ; watch the door of our heart, keep the source of our thoughts, and sanctify the very spring of our will, and all the actions in which it expresses itself, and may we be found at last, through the blood of the Lamb, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Hear Thou the prayer Thy servants pray ; listen to the sighing of the sad ; give peace where there is unrest ; grant a Divine deliverance to those who have been long bound in darkness they cannot penetrate. The Lord's light make our morning glad. The beauty of the Lord Himself be upon us, making our souls lovely with His presence, and strong with His grace. *Amen.*

CLXII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM lxxxix 1-16.]

WE come to Thee, Thou Holy One of Israel, as a God of mercy. Thy mercy is made manifest in Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who loved us and gave Himself for us. Thou didst remember us in our low estate. Being rich in mercy, and being filled with love, Thou didst send Thy Son to save the world. Thou hast made Thy sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and Thou hast sent Thy rain on the just and on the unjust. Thou mightest have turned away from us in wrath, and withheld corn, and wine, and oil, for verily we knew not that our life was nourished by the goodness of God. In the morning will we sing aloud of Thy mercy, and speak of Thee as a God ready to pardon, and will say, Great are Thy tender mercies, O Lord; Thy mercy endureth for ever! Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. When we remember our evil ways, our face is covered with confusion; when we think of our sins, we have no more standing-place before Thee. Have mercy upon us, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness! O Lord, pardon our iniquity; visit us with Thy salvation, and make Thy face to shine upon Thy servants. We will think of the mercy of the Lord, and not of our own transgressions: we will not look unto ourselves, but unto the uplifted Cross of the Divine Saviour. O Lord God of Israel, Creator and Redeemer of all mankind, there is no God like unto Thee, in the heaven nor in the earth, which keepeth covenant, and sheweth mercy unto Thy servants; a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness.

Now the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

CLXIII.]

[Scripture Reading: LUKE i. 68-80.]

*"Begin, my tongue, some heavenly theme,
And speak some boundless thing;
The mighty works, or mightier Name,
Of our eternal King.*

*"Tell of His wondrous faithfulness,
And sound His power abroad;
Sing the sweet promise of His grace,
And the performing God."*

WE thank Thee, O Lord, for security, for home. Except the Lord build our house, the wind will carry it away. We have said to each other, O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation, and begin the day with a psalm of loving praise. Our first thoughts shall be Thine. While yet the day is breaking, our hearts shall find their way to the blessed One whose we are by every right. Thou didst make us, and not we ourselves. Thou wilt not forsake the work of Thine own hands. Thou hast redeemed us with the precious blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son. Every day Thou art revealing Thyself to us in bounty, and love, and pity. To Thee, O Lord, do we belong, and to Thee alone will we give thanks for life, and pardon, and immortality. Thy Son is our Saviour. By many sweet names we know Him, for He is the Flower of Jesse and the Plant of Renown; He is the Bright and Morning Star; He is the Desire of all Nations; yet we know Him best and love Him most by the name of Saviour. Blessed Jesus, we need no arm but Thine, for it is mighty to save; when we rest upon it, our souls are redeemed from fear. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us all the day, and make us calm with heavenly peace. May we hate all meanness, and despise all vanity, and flee from wicked men as from those who lie in wait for our souls. May we carry forth into the world the mystery, the power, the tenderness of this holy communion, so that men may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirit:
Amen.

CLXIV].

[Scripture Reading: JOB vii. 1-11.]

*" Our moments fly apace,
Nor will our minutes stay;
Just like a flood, our hasty days
Are sweeping us away.*

*" Lord, if our days must fly,
We'll keep their end in sight;
We'll spend them all in wisdom's way,
And let them speed their flight."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou who art the Eternal One, have mercy upon us. Thou knowest us altogether, that our days are but a handful, and that even while we call upon Thee our breath is dying. Behold our years are hastening away; they fly away on broad, swift wings, and we cannot tell whither, nor can we find our dead yesterdays.

God be merciful unto us, and remember not the past against us as an accusation. Inspire us with the Holy Ghost: then will our lives be better, nobler, purer: then we shall treasure our moments with most miserly care, and spend them as those who must give an account of their stewardship. Help us to see the Divine meaning of our life, and to hide ourselves within the ample meaning of God's love and wisdom. Preserve our lives from sin, and our hearts from that aching despair which leaves an open gate for the tempter. May we at all times rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.

Hear our vows as we renew them before Thee. We would live better, we would begin anew, we would sin no more. We hate the past, wherein it was guilty, and we would give Thee the future unstained by sin. Hear our vows, and whilst we utter them in all sincerity, minister unto us the grace which will enable us to fulfil them. We bless Thee for the gift of Thine only begotten and well-beloved Son. We know Jesus Christ, we have heard His words, we have touched the hem of His garment, we have seen the overflowing of His sacred blood: we remember that His Cross was set up for us, and in the agony of our contrition He is our only hope. *Amen.*

CLXV.]

[Scripture Reading: LUKE vii. 36-50.]

*" O Lord of heaven, and earth, and sea,
To Thee all praise and glory be;
How shall we show our love to Thee,
Giver of all ?*

*" For peaceful homes and healthful days,
For all the blessings earth displays,
We owe Thee thankfulness and praise,
Giver of all."*

O THOU Giver of every good and perfect gift, we come to Thee in the Name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, and we ask at His Cross for a steadfast faith. We bless Thee if we have any degree of real trust. We are often double-minded, wavering, hesitant ; from this moment we would be of one heart, undivided in thought, undistracted in desire, fixing our whole soul upon Thy kingdom, and living for it, with the assured and immortal hope that we shall thereby enter into it. Thy kingdom is the greatest ; Thy sovereignty ruleth over all ; the grass of the field is Thine, and the golden corn, and the birds of the air, and the lilies of the field ; all the worlds that shine are Thine. We would exclude nothing from Thy kingdom : we would see Thy sceptre everywhere ; we would bow down before Thee in lowliest homage and say, All is our Father's, our Father made them all. Yet sometimes we fall away from this faith, and persuade ourselves to pursue the bubble, which, when we have caught, lo ! it is a disappointment to us : so wondrously are we made. Sometimes we are all body, sometimes we are all soul ; now we are almost in heaven, and now we have forgotten God : yet surely through all the tumult there is one steadfast line of thought and purpose : Thou art lifting us up to nobler realisation of truth, and beauty, and holiness. Work Thy good pleasure in us. If discipline be necessary in still severer measure, Thy will be done ; if the fire has not been hot enough to take away from us the last dross, heat it seven-fold : Thy will be done. If we are wealthier when we are poorer, so be it : Amen ; Thy will be done. The Lord hear us ; we pray at the Cross. *Amen.*

CLXVI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: LUKE xviii. 1-17.]

ALMIGHTY GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, made known to us by Jesus Christ Thy Son our Saviour, all our expectation is from Thee. Teach us how to pray; may we ask largely, and tell Thee all we want, and then say, in the Spirit of our Lord and Priest, Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done. Thou dost encourage us to tell Thee all; may we speak out our very heart; we may permit even our ignorance to state its claims; Thou dost condescend to listen; but when we have told Thee all our words, help us to add, Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done. This prayer Thou dost answer always; help us to speak it in our Saviour's Name, and in our Saviour's Spirit, and to know that Thine answer will be a reply of light, and love, and music. We know not what Thy will is, except we know that it is always good. We would bow down before it when it requires hard things of us; we would stand up and sing concerning it, when it brings us life and liberty. Help us so to renounce ourselves, as to have no self; help us to be swallowed up in love, in obedience, in God. In God may we live, and move, and have our being. We would be children of God, members of the holy household, followers of the eternal Cross.

Deliver us, we beseech Thee, from all the vexations that would hurt the soul, and enable us to bear all the trials and disappointments of life with the patience and resignation of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. To Him we come, to Thee we come through Him; we know no way to Thy footstool but over a place called Calvary. Help us, Eternal Spirit; dwell with us, Father of the universe; teach us, Thou living, loving Saviour, that all our joy may be shaded with sorrow, and yet all our sorrow may be sanctified, and become the token of eternal satisfaction and joy. *Amen.*

CLXVII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: EXODUS xv. 20-26.]

LORD OF LIGHT and glory and peace, Thou hast all blessings ready for us if we come to Thee in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Enable us to come by the right way ; give us the grace of patience ; help us to wait upon the Lord, knowing that in His own time He will send answers of peace to all who put their trust in Him. If Thou dost disappoint us it is to try us. Thou dost come with healing immediately upon the infliction of the wound. If Thou hast smitten us Thou wilt heal us ; if Thou hast torn us Thou wilt bind us up again, and on the third day we shall forget the misery of the first, because of the peace which Thou wilt give. We have wasted the inheritance of grace, we have not answered all the love of God with confidence on our part ; our obedience has been marked by many a flaw, else our righteousness had flowed like a river, our peace had been deep and calm. We mourn our sins, we express our sorrow until we become familiar with the self-accusation : God forgive us, God pity us ; destroy this temptation of familiarity, and give us to feel that every providence is new, every day a new opportunity because a new revelation of God's purpose and love ; and may we wait upon God and ask all His will, and especially cry for the spirit of obedience, that we may do that will unto death. Lift us up when we are cast down ; carry us awhile when the way is too heavy for us, the sun too hot, or the wind too cold ; when there is no water on the road, find a fountain for us, and grant us refreshment by the way ; when we are tired of earth and time and space, because they mock our souls, show us visions which reveal how high, how infinite, how glorious is our Father's house. We leave our prayer at Thy Cross, O Christ ; Thou wilt turn it into an answer, and we shall have great peace. *Amen.*

CLXVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: EZEKIEL XXXIV. 11-16.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou hast made us and not we ourselves: we are the sheep of Thy pasture, we are the flock of Thine own creation; we cannot tell what we are except as we study Thy word and learn somewhat of Thy purpose in forming us. We are mysteries: the forces within us are numerous and strong, sometimes becoming great pains, and again becoming unutterable joys. We are torn by many feelings, and drawn this way and that by unholy influences. Wondrous is our life beyond all other mystery: without any answer in itself, but finding its solution in Thy blessed and eternal word. Are we not broken lights of the true glory? Are we not ruins of a great majesty? Are there not in us voices and tumults, which seem to point to an earlier time, when the music was without break or flaw, part of the great harmony of the Eternal Nature? Now how fallen, how lost, and how utterly helpless are we; we can do naught but cry for relief; and then again are we translated into great heights where the sun never sets, holy raptures and blessed ecstasies, having in them the very quality, and height, and glory of heaven itself. So strange is our life, so troubled this little pulse, so triumphant this throbbing of a heart that must die. Oh teach us what we are, that in Christ we are saved, and pardoned, and purified, and made inheritors of eternal life. Pity our tears when they are signs of weakness, accept them when they are signs of the highest strength; look upon our infirmity and crush it not; Thou wilt not break the bruised reed. Pity us in our littlenesses, and educate us; bear with us, O Thou who art Teacher and Paraclete and Eternal Sovereign; and lead us up into Thy being, to the uttermost bound of Thine own majesty, though it require eternity for our culture. *Amen.*

CLXIX.]

[Scripture Reading: I JOHN ii. 1-17.]

ALmighty GOD, we cannot understand Thy word without Thy Spirit. It is a hard letter: who can obey it? But if Thou wilt show us all the meaning of Thy will, if Thou wilt give us grace to rise to Thy call and do as Thou hast bidden us, then we shall have light and strength, and all our life shall be as a psalm of thanksgiving. Without Thee we have no light: with Thee we have no darkness. Do Thou grant unto us the spirit of light, and love, and tenderness; lead us to the Cross, and enable us from the Cross of Christ to look upon Thy word; then every letter shall be a gospel, every utterance shall be a revelation of Thy will. We pray that we may know Thy law more perfectly; that we may look to it more intently; that we may stoop down to see what Thou hast written, that we may rise up to obey Thee, and practise all Thy law. Thus may we be steadfast, wise, and strong; not carried away like double-minded souls, that for lack of constancy fail to realise the purpose of God and the end of life.

We come to Thee day by day for grace, for strength, for light: help us to see aright; and forbid that we should fasten our attention upon things that are but for a moment; set the spirit of eternity in our thought; lead us to feel that we belong to other and wider spheres, and that we are here but for a moment, and are on our way to God's eternal heaven: then shall we walk decorously, honestly, openly in the world, neither fearing men nor courting their favour, because we fear God and live in Him, and are clothed as with a garment with the righteousness and beauty of Christ.

*" O Thou, the contrite sinner's Friend,
Who loving, lov'st them to the end,
On this alone my hopes depend,
That Thou wilt plead for me !*

*" When the full light of heavenly day
Reveals my sins in dread array,
Say Thou hast washed them all away;
O say, Thou plead'st for me !"*

Amen.

CLXX.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM lxxxvi.

*" Lord, teach us how to pray aright,
With reverence and with fear;
Though dust and ashes in Thy sight,
We may, we must draw near.*

*" Burdened with guilt, convinced of sin,
In weakness, want, and woe,
Fightings without, and fears within,
Lord, whither shall we go?"*

ALMIGHTY GOD, it does us good to tell Thee, moment by moment, what we feel, and to speak our feeling with the solemnity of a vow. We are foolish, yet Thou art pleased to hear our words. Behold, our life is one long wreck: the vows are nearly all dead; our prayers are lying round about us like leaves that are withered. Yet still we are found looking upward, as if we had never shamed the heavens, and praying unto God as if we had obeyed all His will. We take comfort herein; we say, Surely God is in us after all, and our life is a heaven-gate; truly the Lord doth not mean to destroy us, or He would not have spared our praying breath; we have affronted Him so often, yet still His mercy invites our intercession. So we will now take heart again and speak by the right of Thy mercy, if not by the permission of Thy justice. Now and again Thou dost show us so much of Thy love that we forget all other things, and are lost, absorbed in God. Thou dost show us the Cross of Christ sometimes so clearly that the heavens are dark compared with its brightness. It is the banquet of reconciliation, it is the feast of love, it is a revelation of God's justice and law, God's righteousness and mercy; and as the mystery grows upon our wondering eyes, our hearts exclude all other thoughts, and are filled with the light and the peace of better worlds. Let Thy blessing be given to us as our weary lives most need it. Give us a season of clear shining after rain. In all times and under all circumstances bind us to Thyself, Thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in Thy fulness may we find our sufficiency. *Amen.*

CLXXI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM xxxvii. 1-24.]

SAVIOUR OF MEN, not one day would we live without Thee; every morning would we be found at Thy gates. We would live, and move, and have our being in God. We would rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; we would have no desire that cannot be satisfied by His grace. Our hearts would be as temples of the Holy Ghost, in which the Loving One reigns and rules with all the omnipotence of love.

We come to bless Thee for all Thy care. There is nothing too small for Thee to look at. Thou rulest the heavens and Thou bledest little children. Thou lightest the lamps which flame across the universe, and Thou dost make the lily beautiful in its quiet place. Thou numberest the hairs of our head, Thou gatherest up our tears, our heart-throbs Thou dost count one by one: when the last pulsation comes, our immortality shall begin.

Thou knowest what we need; grant unto us, we humbly pray Thee, in the Name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, that which our heart most truly requires. Wherein we are inspired to speak of our real and vital wants, do Thou command Thy blessing to rest upon us, even life for evermore. Pity us when we are infirm and little in purpose; save us when we are most conscious of our aggravated guilt; fill our vision with Thy beauty when that which is of earth and time would tempt us with its meaner attractions.

Create within us a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Pardon our last transgressions. The Lord pity us, the Lord forgive us. Our prayer is not of our own utterance, nor is it offered in our own name. We pray in the Name of the Priest, the Intercessor, the One Mediator between God and man. *Amen.*

CLXXII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xliii.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, give us knowledge of Thy truth, we humbly pray Thee: it shall be unto us as light, and rest, and riches that can never be fully spent. Withhold from us what Thou wilt of present blessing, but grant unto us Thy Holy Spirit, then shall it be well with our souls: there shall be no night in our life, and death itself in all its bitterness shall be considered as past. We bless Thee for any disposition we have to hear of nobler and diviner things than those of earth: once we were satisfied with the dust under our feet, yea, the garden with its dying flowers was paradise enough for us: once our appetite and passion ruled us, and we knew no God but our own will. If now we have been delivered from this imprisonment, behold this miracle also is of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes. Now we look away from the dust, and we fix our eyes upon things eternal; no longer satisfied with the odour of a dying flower, we desire the whole Eden that is in heaven, the very paradise and home of God. For this hunger of the heart we bless Thee: it is chief of pains, yet is it chief of joys: it is a hunger which Thou only canst satisfy, but Thou art God, and Thy satisfactions are heaven.

We commend one another to Thy care and keeping. Bless the aged and the young; take the little children into Thine arms, Thou tender Shepherd: may they never wander from Thy fold. Pity us in all our sinfulness, pardon us in the very height and aggravation of our guilt; show us that the blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son cleanseth from all sin; and to that blood alone may our hearts look for cleansing.

*"Wash me, and take away each stain,
Let nothing of my sin remain;
For cleansing, though it be through pain,
Christ Crucified, I come.*

*"To be what Thou would'st have me be,
Accepted, sanctified in Thee,
Through what Thy grace shall work in me,
Christ Crucified, I come."*

Amen.

CLXXIII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM cxix. 1-8.]

LORD, teach us how to pray. We speak so much out of our ignorance: we mistake appearances for realities, and continually are we doing the things we ought not to do. Help us to lay our case before Thee, and to leave Thyself both to inspire the prayer and to grant the answer. We know what we want, and yet we do not know what we need: we really do not know the depth of our necessity; therefore have we no words in which to plead with Thee. Lord, look upon us from heaven Thyself, look into our heart of hearts, into our innermost life, see what our poverty really is, and then, of Thine abundant grace, do Thou mercifully and abundantly supply all our necessity.

We come before Thee as sinners who have lost all title to pray. We have sinned with both hands resolutely, and our whole heart has gone away from Thee, straying far into forbidden places, and eating fruit which we ought not to have touched. We come therefore penitentially into Thy presence: self-excuse we have none, our conscience condemns us, and our heart pleads guilty to Thy law. What then is our hope? and if we may open our lips in Thy sight, what may we say? Only this, and this is all, God be merciful to me a sinner. Thou knowest all the compass of that cry, all that it means which we dare not say; Thou wilt from the Cross of Christ declare our sins forgiven and our transgressions forgotten. Wash us every one in the blood that is indeed precious, the sacred, holy blood of atonement; it was shed for sin, for the sins of the whole world. So in our despair we come again to the Tree that lifts itself up high as heaven, on which is dying, yet living for evermore, the holy Son of God.

*"Just as I am—without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.*

*"Just as I am—and waiting not
To rid myself of one dark blot;
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come." Amen.*

CLXXIV.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM xi.

WE will speak unto the Lord that we may seek good at His hands. But first we praise the Lord from whom we receive daily mercies. Thy compassions, O Lord, we cannot number, nor can we set a bound to Thy love. We live, and move, and have our being in God. Thou art round about us and within us, and Thy thought concerning us is that we may be beautiful with the unspeakable holiness of Christ. In our daily business may we magnify the Spirit of our blessed Saviour. By our uprightness, our liberality, our unselfishness, and our love of truth may men take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. Within our own habitation may we be gentle, forbearing, helpful to one another, and most gracious in thought and charity. May we be faithful in our work, patient with all ignorance and weakness, and rich in sympathy towards all who need pity or guidance. May we recognise the reality and the mystery of life. We walk by the brink of death. On every feast there is a shadow ; in every success there is a disappointment ; in every honour there is a sting. Help us, therefore, to fix our hearts constantly on Christ, to whose tender blessing no bitterness of sorrow is added. May the old and the young flee to the Cross, yea may every heart enjoy the sweet, deep, eternal rest of faith in the Son of God. Lord, hear us, and grant us answers large as Thine own immeasurable love. We pray all this in Christ's Name, sweetest, tenderest Name, that holds within it every other name of love, and light, and blessing.

Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CLXXV.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM lxxxv.

ALMIGHTY GOD, do Thou speak unto us Thyself, for we shall know Thy voice, and our hearts shall answer Thee with gladness. Jesus, Son of God, Thy sheep know Thy voice, and they follow Thee; a stranger they do not know, neither will they follow him. Speak to us Thyself, O Son of God. Thou dost reveal the Father; Thou dost speak great gospels; Thou dost eat with sinners. Who may not speak to Thee, Thou Son of God? Thou didst never turn away any who really wished with the heart to hold communion with Thee. We are often in trouble when we need not be so: our fears becloud us, and distress us; and, behold, they never come to pass; they are only clouds. When our trouble is really great, then Thou dost not forsake us; then we know there is balm in Gilead, and there is a Physician there. God be merciful unto us: give us assurance of daily pardon, and strengthen our confidence in every Divine promise; then shall our life be quiet and bright, and strong and good. Hear the desires we cannot put into words, see the falling of secret tears on account of secret sin, and help us, one and all, with the unfailing strength of Thine infinite grace, to live before Thee in all affection, in all faith, and in pure desire to know and do Thy blessed will.

Let this house be precious to Thee; may it be a home wherein dwells the Spirit of rest and broods the angel of peace. Let our little ones grow strong and wise, and become sources of gladness in the house. Let those who represent the older generation be comforted with rich solaces, and made quite young again—not in their flesh, but in their Christian inspiration and hope.

*"Light of Lights! with morning shine,
Lift on us Thy light Divine;
And let charity benign
Breathe on us her balm."*

*"Light of Lights! when falls the even,
Let it sink on sins forgiven!
Fold us in the peace of heaven,
Shed a vesper calm."*

Amen.

CLXXVI.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM lxx.

ALMIGHTY GOD, do Thou draw near to us, and bring with Thee all the blessings which we require. We pray this in the Name and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, who bought us with His precious blood. We cannot tell all that He did. While we were yet sinners He died for us. As Thou hast given unto us Thy Son, Thou wilt also with Him freely give us all things. We accept the Cross as the sign of Thy love. The Cross is from eternity; the Lamb was slain from before the foundations of the world; behold, the atonement was rendered before the sin was done. We will pray with large hopefulness. Thou givest largely, not grudgingly. We cannot tell how much Thou wilt give, but Thou wilt withhold nothing that is good for us. The Lord God is a sun and shield. No good thing wilt Thou withhold from them that walk uprightly. We will pray for blessings suited to our necessity, and we will pray for such chastening as may be needful for our sanctification. We need more light. Oh, drive the cloud away, scatter the east wind, hold Thou the lamp of glory above all the fields of truth; then shall we see the boundaries, and distances, and colours, and the whole outline shall be vivid to our entranced vision. We do not need a new Bible; we need more of the Spirit that wrote it, more of the light that is in it; we need the pure heart, which is the far-seeing eye: then shall Thy book spread itself like an infinite tree, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. Thou hast put all truth into Thy book; little by little it discovers itself; day by day we see further, day by day we hear more: speak, Lord, for Thy servants hear.

*"Gentle, awful, holy Guest,
Make Thy temple in each breast—
There Thy presence be confessed;
Comforter Divine.*

*"With us, for us, intercede,
And with voiceless groanings, plead
Our unutterable need,
Comforter Divine."*

Amen.

CLXXVII.]

[Scripture Reading: HEBREWS xii. 18-29.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we come to the throne of grace in the Name of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us. Through Him we bring our praises, our confessions, and our petitions. Thou dost come to us every day with surprises of care, and tenderness, and affection. From our earliest memory Thou hast been with us; Thou hast made the rough places plain, and the crooked places Thou hast made straight. Thy wondrous love shall be our theme evermore; we stand in Thy love. We love God because He first loved us. Thine was an awakening love, Thine was a call; ours is but a reply. May we ever answer Thee according to our own measure, according to the revelation of Thy love towards us. May we ever consult Thy will. We would have but one desire, to know what God would have us do. We confess all our sins. We cannot name them, nor dare we if we could. God be merciful unto us, sinners. This must be our cry. Our hearts condemn us; we have no plea, or excuse, or self-defence; we have done the things we ought not to have done; all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way. It is an evil way. We see it now. We saw the way; we did not see the ruin. Having confessed our sin, we would henceforward endeavour to live according to the law of Thy righteousness and to walk in the way of Thy statutes. To this end, Holy Spirit, dwell with us; sanctify us; make us, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

*" Grant us Thy cheering grace, O Lord,
Thy mercy freely give;
Speak by Thy Spirit and Thy word,
That we may hear and live.*

*" Pardon'd, accepted, reconciled,
Through Christ's atoning blood;
May each one feel himself a child
Of Thee, our Father, God."*

Amen.

CLXXVIII.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM lxvi.]

ALmighty GOD, we thank Thee for all Thy kindness; it is new every morning, it is a surprise every moment; the kindness is always there. May we have the eyes that can see it, the heart that can feel it, and the life that can respond to it in all manner of good-doing. Thou knowest the littleness of our life, the frailty in which we live, Thou knowest the momentous issues which Thou hast hung upon this present life; enable us to be awake in the soul, to be on the alert evermore, lest the tempter be too much for us, and bring us down by subtle suggestion from all high faith and burning prayer to littleness, and selfishness, and worldliness.

The Lord make the old young, make the young glad with abiding joy. The Lord order all things belonging to us, and give us such skill in the handling of life that we may not appear to be foolish at the last. The Lord hear us when we confess our sins, our daily story of shame and guilt cleanse us in the atoning blood. This prayer we present in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, without whom we know not what prayer is, nor do we know the way to the altar; but He hath set up the Cross: He hath made a broad way towards Thyself. Enable us to meet at the Cross, to worship at the Cross, to throw ourselves upon our dying, mighty Lord, and say, He is our salvation, and all our desire; then shall there be in our poor hearts sense of victory, sense of the nearness and goodness of God.

*"Jesus, Peace and Joy art Thou,
Joy and peace for ever!
Joy that fades not, changes not,
Peace that leaves us never.
Joy and peace we have in Thee,
Now and through eternity.*

*"Jesus, Song and Strength art Thou,
Strength and song for ever!
Strength that never can decay,
Song that ceaseth never.
Still to us this strength and song
Through eternal days prolong."*

Amen.

CLXXIX.]

[Scripture Reading : MARK x. 35-52.]

O THAT this day we might see the Lord and have our mind filled with His light and joy. Lord, dost Thou ask us what we would have at Thy hands? Our answer is, Lord, that we might receive our sight! When men cry unto the Lord in their trouble, Thou dost deliver them out of their distresses; in this hope we come now before the Lord, and even whilst we speak to Thee our hearts feel the burden rising.

For every blessing we offer Thee our praise. Thou didst lead us through the solitary way, and Thou hast spared us from the shadow of death. Our souls are Thine; our bodies are Thy habitation. Thou art mindful of us with great care, and Thy banner over us is love. Thy judgments are very terrible, but Thy mercies are greater still. Our life is full of the mercy of the Lord, and our days are made bright by His goodness. Lord, let not our feet stray from the path of Thy will. Lord, comfort us, encourage our souls in the day of fear, and let our weakness hide itself in Thy great power. We lay down our own wisdom as ignorance, and run away from our towers as from defences that will crush the life that built them. We come to Jesus. We confess our sin. We acknowledge our transgressions. We stand beside the Saviour. We know the power of His blood. Lord, help us. Lord, send upon us the blessing of Thine infinite pardon. Lord, show us the light of Thy face.

*" Great God of wonders! all Thy ways
Are matchless, godlike, and Divine;
But the fair glories of Thy grace
More godlike and unrivalled shine.
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?"*

*" In wonder lost, with trembling joy
We take the pardon of our God—
Pardon for crimes of deepest dye,
A pardon bought with Jesus' blood.
Who is a pardoning God like Thee?
Or who has grace so rich and free?"*
Amen.

CLXXX.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN XX. 19-31.]

*"Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way;
With Thee begun, with Thee shall end,
the day;
Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts
from shame,
That in this house have called upon Thy
Name.*

*"Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life,
Our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we pray Thee to grant us Thy peace. Not as the world giveth dost Thou give peace; none can disturb the rest which Thou dost give. May the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds. Save us from indifference, save us from all neglect of Thy law, and draw out our hearts in loving desire towards Thee, so that our life shall become a great passion of consecration and trust. We bless Thee for Thy gospel, infinite in light, infinite in love, touching our heart in all its guilt and addressing itself to our keenest pains. Constrain us to love Thee more and more; give us such a view of Thy providences as shall humble us, and exalt us in faith and love. Save us from supposing that we have done anything of our own wit or strength; show us that without Christ we can do nothing, and then show us that we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us. Nourish us with bread from heaven; when our lips are athirst draw us to the river of God, which is full of water. When we are broken down by reason of infirmity or distress within or without, oh, come to us with all Thy redemption and healing, and lift up our hearts, rekindling our best hopes, and making us glad with the joy of angels. Look upon us as we are thus gathered; grant unto us according to the need of each heart. Let each one hear a message from Thee: a call to repentance, a promise of pardon, a call to higher and wider service. Wash us in the sacrificial blood, cleanse us from all sin by the power of the atonement of the infinite, holy Saviour. *Amen.*

CLXXXI.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xcii.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, if we are remembered by Thee, it matters not by whom we are forgotten. Thou wert mindful of us in our low estate, and, whilst we were yet far off in the wilderness, Thine eye pitied, and Thine arm was outstretched in salvation. And now that we have returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, and are enfolded with those that love and follow Thee, surely Thy remembrance of us will be quicker than ever, and Thy tenderness will flow towards us in perpetual fulness.

We bow our heads before Thee, and make confession of our sin: we have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. We implore Thy forgiveness through Jesus Christ our blessed and infinite Redeemer. Wherein our conscience is oppressed as with a great weight, wherein our life is made gloomy by the darkness of sin, the Lord manifest Himself towards us in pity and compassion. The Lord be merciful unto us, remembering that we came of the dust, and that we are but as a wind that cometh for a little time and then passeth away. Pity our littlenesses, and let our infirmities become sacred unto Thee as opportunities for the exercise of Thy gracious power. Thou knowest what anger is left in our hearts, what pride, what ambition, what self-sufficiency; and what cunning secret trust there is that after all the key of the kingdom may fall into our hands, and be used according to our desire. Lord, cleanse our hearts of these evil spirits, and leave none of them behind, but reign Thyself in the chambers Thou hast purified.

*"O God of Bethel, by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led.*

*"Our vows, our prayers, we now present
Before Thy throne of grace;
God of our fathers, be the God
Of their succeeding race."*

Amen.

CLXXXII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM lvi.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, teach us what trust is, for we do not know the full meaning of that great word. We do not trust God; though we say we do, yet it is with sinful reserve, and with many a secret attempt to be our own guides. Thus is our godliness a mistake, and our religion is full of deceit. We would be led out into perfectness of trust, so that there shall be in our heart not even a memory of fear: it shall be a forgotten word, and our souls shall live in the sun of an eternal hope. Perfect love casteth out fear, but we are full of fear; we tremble and are in distress, and sudden dismays overwhelm the soul, as if there were no high Rock to flee to, and no Father in whom to trust. We say we know God, and have seen the Father's love: we say we have been to the Cross of Christ, and there taken deep and solemn oath that we would love Him with our whole heart—yet we have not answered our own prayer, and our most steadfast vow is turned into a bitter reproach. Lord, increase our faith; make us true of heart, and noble of soul, simple in purpose. Set up the idea of Christ so loftily and completely in our nature that all our ideas shall revolve round it as meaner lights. Let all Thy kindness in nature repeat itself on the wider scale of providence, and all Thy wonderful goodness in providence be multiplied by all the extension of Thy redeeming love, and thus may our life go upward, ever heightening, ever brightening. Show us that they who do the will shall know the doctrine; that to obey is to learn; that to be willing to do what we already know is a pledge of a still further revelation from God. Reveal to us, we pray Thee, more and more the horribleness of sin; and grant unto us even a fuller revelation of the wonderful redemption wrought by blood, by Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, the Son of God. *Amen.*

CLXXXIII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : HEBREWS i.]

ALmighty GOD, we come to Thee through Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, for He alone is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and there is none other. He is sent of God to bring us unto the Father, and no man cometh unto Christ except the Father draw him. Herein are wonderful mysteries which we cannot penetrate; but where we cannot understand we fall down and adore. We bless Thee for Thy word. It shows us where the Tree is, the branches of which will sweeten the bitter pool: it is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Help us to understand it by our modesty, self-renunciation, and unquestioning trust. Thou dost speak wonderful things to the child-heart: may ours evermore be such. Save us from our own imaginings, deliver us from the temptations of our own learning, and help us in all simpleness, with love of heart, and with the openness of soul which receives all Heaven's gifts, to wait upon the Lord, yea, to wait patiently for Him.

We put ourselves into Thy hands. We know not what a day may bring forth: nor need we care, for we are lifted up above necessity by the grace of Christ dwelling in us. He repeats to us the story of His life; He tells us of the Father; He whispers to us words of sweetness we cannot repeat, but which we can receive and live upon and cherish like the very gift of Heaven. We bless Thee for Thy Son. Jesus Christ our Saviour loved us: He gave Himself for us, His head, His hands, His heart, His feet, His side, bled for us: it was holy blood—the blood of atonement.

Remembering His Cross, His precious blood, His infinite sacrifice, we commit our prayer to His priesthood, and we know the answer will be great and sure. *Amen.*

CLXXXIV.]

[*Scripture Reading*: LUKE xvii. 1-10.]

LORD, increase our faith, and make it the supreme fact in our life; raise us above all doubt and fear, and cause us so to trust in Thee through Him who is the living One and the Giver of life as to be independent of all that is without. Root us and ground us in Thy love; may Thy word dwell in us richly, an answer to every temptation, a solace to every sorrow, and may there be nothing wanting to complete the beauty of our character in Christ Jesus. We live by sight too much; we are the victims of our own senses, and we are led away by our own foolish sagacity. Oh that we might live henceforth in Christ only, abiding in Him as branches in the living Vine—then should we bring forth much fruit, and our Father would be glorified. Give us such views of life as Jesus takes from His Cross and from His Throne; save us from all the fallacy of appearances, and deliver us from the deceit of our own senses. Take down the veil which separates our soul from the inmost and essential beauty, and may we see things as they are, and rest patiently in the Lord.

Let Thy blessing, we humbly pray Thee, come upon every one of us; upon us who call this house our home, upon the sorrow-laden heart, and upon the young life that is all dream and gladness; and thus upon every one of us let there come down some token of Thy loving care. Have mercy upon us; pardon and deliver us from our sins. We bless Thee that the blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son cleanseth from all sin—this is the eternal gospel, this is the message of Thine infinite love. May we receive it with all the delight of contrition; may we give it welcome with all gladness; may we know what is the mystery of Thy pardon, that we may know also the mystery of Thy peace. *Amen.*

CLXXXV.]

[*Scripture Reading*: ISAIAH lvii. 15-21.]

*" Lord, we come before Thee now;
At Thy feet we humbly bow:
O do not our suit disdain:
Shall we seek Thee, Lord, in vain ?*

*" Grant that those who seek may find
Thee, a God supremely kind.
Heal the sick, the captive free:
Let us all rejoice in Thee."*

ALmighty GOD, show us how near Thou art to every one of us; Thou art not far from the lowest of Thy creatures; Thou dwellest in the broken and contrite heart. To the broken heart Thou wilt ever look with love, and there Thou wilt ever dwell. This is the message we have received concerning the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.

We have heard of Jesus as the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the earth. He was before the beginning, He is from everlasting to everlasting the same: dying, rising, pleading; the Priest of the universe. The universe is His, He made it; all things were made by Him, and for Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. He shines in every sun, He blooms in every flower; His are the flowing rivers, and His the infinite sea. We desire, therefore, that we may recognise Christ in all things, in all life, in all light; yea, we desire to see the Cross at the heart of creation. In Christ Jesus we find all we need; He is All in all. Enable us, therefore, to bring our little time and hide it in His eternity; help us to sink our sin in His grace; then shall we know the meaning of that sweet word, where sin abounded grace did much more abound. Give our hearts a lifting up; destroy the spirit of fear, and say to every soul, Thou hast a right to hope in God, for God made thee, God inspired thee, and God will love thee evermore. We now go forth to attempt our duty: Lord, help us to do it with a faithful spirit and a diligent hand. We say this at the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed and only Saviour of the world, to whom be praise and adoration evermore. *Amen.*

CLXXXVI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: JOHN xvii. 15-26.]

LORD, that we might receive our sight. This again is our heart's desire. We want to see things beyond, things that are spiritual, things that are eternal; Lord, that we might receive our sight. Hast Thou not told us how we may see? Hear we not a voice coming down from the mountains, saying, Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God?—they shall see all sights in one. Lord, that our hearts might be pure. To this end may Thy Holy Spirit dwell in us, ruling us mightily and graciously according unto His wisdom, bringing us into closer fellowship with Thyself, and communicating unto us Thy truth as we may be able to bear it. Jesus told us He had much to say, but He kept silence lest we should be over-weighted; we could not then carry all the story of His heart: are we not stronger now? may we not now ask to see the inner mystery, the deeper truth, the brighter light? If our prayers have become ennobled and enlarged, what is this but a miracle of Thy Holy Spirit? Now we dare look up, for there is no frowning One looking down upon us from the heights, but our Father, gracious, tender, compassionate; and He looks upon us through the medium of the Cross. We erected the Cross; we slew Thy Son. We remember this, and are sad; we recall it in the truer light, and are filled with joy, for through human instrumentality the Scriptures were fulfilled, and the purpose of God in the salvation of the world was realised. To this same Jesus we come for everything: He is bread, and water, and light, and comfort. Because He died the death of the Cross, we come boldly to the throne of grace, with open heart, and open mouth, and earnest prayer; and we beseech Thee that we may receive our sight and our strength and inspiration to serve the Saviour with tenderer love. *Amen.*

CLXXXVII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : I CHRONICLES xxix. 6-16.]

FOR all Thy mercy how shall we praise Thee, O Lord? We fail in our praise as we fail in all other duty and service; we cannot reach the height of our own gladness, it lies beyond all our power of speech; we pray Thee, therefore, to look into our hearts and to read there the songs that cannot be uttered. We have nothing that we have not received: Thy Name is upon all that we have enjoyed; yea, Thou hast spread our table, Thou hast anointed our head with oil, Thou hast caused our cup to run over, and what we have to fear, the valley of the shadow of death, Thou hast lighted up into a way leading homeward unto the Fatherland.

We now lovingly put ourselves into Thy hands, to be conducted as Thou wilt through all difficulties and snares. Disappoint us if it be for our souls' health that we should be stung and wounded and have sudden night descending upon our brightest days. Do Thou hunger us and impoverish us and give us pain continually, if it can be only through this process that we may be saved. Not our will, but Thine, be done, only take not Thy Holy Spirit from us. Thou hast led us by ways that we knew not, but all Thy leading has been good. Wherein we have brought mischief and distress upon ourselves, we would mourn the sin which caused the grief, and seek in humble prayer the forgiveness which it is Thine alone to exercise. Thou knowest our life: its pain, its want, its load, its aching heart—regard us in Thy tender pity; let Thy messages come to us according to our need. Regard with loving tenderness all for whom we ought to pray: our sick ones; our tired ones; any who may be travelling by land or sea; fill our young ones with gladness and hope, and draw their hearts to Thyself. The Lord encompass us all with His love, and ever have us in His holy keeping. *Amen.*

CLXXXVIII.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM lxxiii. 1-25.]

*" Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me,
The changes that are sure to come
I do not fear to see;
I ask Thee for a present mind
Intent on pleasing Thee.*

*" I ask Thee for the daily strength
To none that ask denied;
A mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at Thy side:
Content to fill a little space,
If Thou be glorified."*

MERCIFUL FATHER, be pleased to guide us in all the way of life. We know not what to do, but if Thou wilt teach us what is right and what is wrong, and put Thy Holy Spirit within us, we shall abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good. Thus shall we know that God is with us, because we love godliness; we shall have no doubt of Thy presence in our souls, because we resist the devil and all his temptations and thoughts; we shall be quite sure that Thou art dwelling in us, because of our love of honesty, nobleness, and all things truly lovely. By these proofs we would have our faith established, and by no other. We would not live in the words of men, but in the assured presence and comfort of God.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, dwell in us; take up Thine abode in our hearts, and abide there day by day till time with us shall be no longer; then shall we be full of joy, we shall not see when the drought cometh, the wilderness shall be a garden, the desert shall be as pools of water. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, whom we adore as Three persons in One God, receive the thanks of every heart, world without end. Pardon our sin, cleanse us with the blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son; pity all our infirmities and littlenesses and fretfulnesses; remember always that we are but dust, a wind that cometh for a little time and then goeth away. Lord, look upon us in our frailty, and pity us as Thou hast ever done. *Amen.*

CLXXXIX.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM civ. 1-24.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, all the light is Thine. We pray Thee that we may walk in the light, and know how near Thou art, and feel the touch of Thy hand; then all shall be brightness and joy, yea, there shall be in our hearts a whole heaven of peace, and whilst we are yet on the earth we shall be in the society of the spirits of the blessed. Thou hast made ours a wondrous life: we cannot tell what it is, in all its mystery of pain, and love, and fear, and hope. Verily, we are fearfully and wonderfully made. We would know whence we are, why we are here, whither we are going; we seem to be breathing questions continually to Heaven, and yet how seldom do we hear replies. Yet Thou dost answer us—in new impulse, in purified motive, in an outgoing of soul which Thou alone couldst create and sustain. Great is the mystery of godliness—all godliness, all good conduct, all sweet temper, all heavenly charity. Oh that we might know more of this mystery, and exemplify our knowledge in behaviour such as becometh saints. Yet Thou knowest our frame, Thou rememberest that we are dust; Thou art pitiful towards us,—yea, our infirmities are our plea. Our life is a great cry of need, often a sharp utterance of pain, always a great wonder and a sacred hope.

Spirit of the living God, come now—Spirit of fire, answer us from the high heavens—Spirit of life, let Thine answer be unto us great and tender and full of satisfaction. Dry the tears of our sorrow, lift us up when we are cast down, speak comfortably unto us, let tender solaces recover our strength, and messages from heaven rekindle the lamp of our hope. Oh save us, Mighty One—draw us to Thyself, and set not the foot of Thy power upon any one of us, or we shall be destroyed, but open Thine heart and bid us welcome to Thy love, and show us the meaning of the Cross. *Amen.*

CXC.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM xci.]

THOU who art mightier than the mightiest, make the crookedness of our way straight, and renew the beauty which our sin has spoiled. Thou dost hide the future from our eyes, yet dost Thou cause it to throw a spell upon the time that now is, making it painful and yet glad, making it burn with the fire of much fear, yet brightening it with the blessing of a gracious hope. Help us to rest in God ; increase our patience, and make our trust like a great rock. We know not how to read all Thy way ; the shadow falls suddenly ; and our eyes stumble when the light is too keen. We are unstable as water, yet sometimes are we calm with triumphant faith. If we say we are nothing, we shall speak truly ; and if we claim to be children of God, we shall speak the very word of Thy mouth. How marvellous are Thy ways, yet are they right, and ever do they end in heavenly security and peace. Help us to believe this, then shall our souls be quiet and glad. Truly hast Thou humbled us oftentimes, but Thou hast as surely exalted us. Thou hast spared us somewhat that our life might not utterly die.

Lord Jesus, we yearn for Thee. Our souls miss Thee as the flowers miss the light. Let Thine absence be brief, and let Thy coming again be without cloud or storm. When Thou art near we cannot die ; when Thou art absent we cannot live. Oh, sweeter than all human love is the tenderness of the Christ of God. Beyond all thought, it is beyond all words : it makes our tears a comfort, and it fills our night with stars. Gentle Saviour, look upon us in this land of groaning, and make a way home for us across the pathless desert. Lord, spare the life that would serve Thee. Make not an utter end of us by Thy judgments, but save us and help us. Incline Thine ear unto us, and our prayer shall come again to our hearts as a blessing from heaven. *Amen.*

CXCI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM cxlvii. 1-12.]

FATHER OF OUR SPIRITS and God of all grace, Thou knowest what things we have need of before we ask Thee. We come to Thee now in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, for there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved. We stand by the Cross, and there we pray. Thou hast kept our eyes from tears, our feet from falling, and our soul from death; and because Thy hand has been upon us we have been spared until this day. We have nothing that we have not received: all good gifts come down from God; help us, in receiving these good gifts, to look up and see the Giver with our hearts, and thank and praise Him with a cheerful voice. Thanks be unto God for every mercy, thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. Guide us this day, defend and uphold us according to our necessity, and may all our thought and purpose be in accordance with Thy blessed will; and this we pray in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with the Holy Spirit and Thyself, be everlasting praise.

What hast Thou done for us that is lacking in mercy, or love, or greatness? Thou hast saved our souls with the blood of Jesus Christ; Thou hast opened all heaven to our souls; Thou hast shown us that beyond the sky there lies a land of wonders, a place of light, radiant with the smile of God. Death is abolished, the victory has been taken from the grave; now we have no more fear, for the valley of the shadow of death is itself part of the way to the land of glory. Stablish us and comfort us in this faith; then we shall do our day's work cheerfully, industriously, and faithfully, and when the evening shadows gather we shall know that we have done Thy will, because of Thy Spirit who has dwelt within us. *Amen.*

CXCII.]

[Scripture Reading : PROVERBS iv. 14-27.]

OUR FATHER which art in heaven, we bless Thee that we can look unto Thee as our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Thou hast been with us in six troubles, and in seven Thou wilt not forsake us. Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, yet Thou art the everliving and everloving Father of men. Thou dost come through all the cloud of our sins and show us the light of Thy love, bidding us welcome to the Cross of Thy Son, that there our guilt may be forgiven. For the shelter of our home, for our quietness and rest, for our renewed strength, and for our table spread by Thy hands, we bless Thee with grateful hearts. We know not what may befall us this day ; nor are we careful to inquire, seeing that we put our souls into Thy keeping. Our life is more precious to Thee than it can be to ourselves. Thou didst create it ; Thou hast redeemed it ; Thou art waiting for it in the upper worlds. May none of us fail of heaven at last. By constant waiting at the Cross, by lovingly doing all the commandments of Christ ; by patiently accepting all Thy visitations, may we find when the dream of life is over that we are meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in glory. This day keep our lips, guard our tongue ; may no evil thing proceed out of our hearts, and may our whole aim be to bless the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To this end we pray Thee to grant unto us much of Thy Holy Spirit. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from us.

*" Come, Holy Comforter,
Thy sacred witness bear,
In this glad hour :
Thou who almighty art,
Now rule in every heart,
And ne'er from us depart,
Spirit of power !*

*" To the Great One in Three,
Eternal praises be,
Hence evermore :
His sovereign majesty,
May we in glory see,
And to eternity
Love and adore."*

Amen.

CXCIII.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM ix. 1-10.]

*"O give thanks to Him who made
Morning light and evening shade;
Source and Giver of all good,
Nightly sleep and daily food;
Quickener of our wearied powers;
Guard of our unconscious hours.*

*"O give thanks to nature's King,
Who made every breathing thing:
His, our warm and sentient frame,
His, the mind's immortal flame.
O how close the ties that bind
Spirits to the Eternal Mind!"*

ALmighty GOD, Giver of all good, we come to Thee this morning with a song of thankfulness. Thou hast beset us behind and before, and laid Thine hand upon us, therefore are we spared to meet one another at the throne of grace. Grant unto us the gift of the Holy Ghost, that we may be pure in heart, wise in understanding, and obedient in will. Give us light upon light, and grace upon grace, that we may truly know ourselves to be children of the Most High, cared for and enriched by His Spirit and His bounty. Write in our hearts the blessings which Thou hast pronounced upon those who are poor in spirit, meek, merciful, peace-loving, and peace-making, and above all things create within us a clean heart and renew within us a right spirit. In so far as we are able to look upon the coming day without fear, we bless the Lord. Give us the full use of our faculties; may our minds be quick in discernment and true in judgment, and may all our decisions be guided and determined by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Keep us from all unworthy thought and all unworthy conduct, and may we know ourselves this day to be Thy servants and to be accountable to God for all our actions. Take away from us the spirit of fear and dread; drive out of the sky the cloud that affrights us, and high above all other things may we see the sacred Cross on which our Saviour died for the sins of the world. Lord, regard us as little children, take us up in Thine arms and bless us, then into our hearts there shall descend the gift of peace as a dove coming down from heaven. *Amen.*

CXCIV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : THESSALONIANS V. 14-28.]

GIVER OF ALL GOOD, we bless Thee for faith ; it is a new life, a new light, a great liberty ; we are now no longer under the law but under grace ; we have escaped from bondage, and have come into the wide liberty, yea the glorious freedom, of the sons of God. We are made right, not by the work of our hands, but by a living faith. This is the gift of God. It is not in man to create his own faith or to exercise it : behold, this is the miracle which all men must learn. Faith is Thy gift, the exercise of it cometh of the inspiration of God ; so then we have nothing of right, and nothing of worth, and nothing of mere service ; we have all in Christ, and through Christ, the great gift of God which is eternal life. This is the heritage of them that love Thee, this is the blessedness of those whose lives are hidden with Christ in God. May we this day walk in the confidence of a true faith. For Thy defence we bless Thee, for Thy Spirit we thank Thee with fulness of love. Lead us, guide us, beset us behind and before, and may we know the mystery of living and moving and having our being in God : then shall our bread be assured, and our water shall not fail, Thy rod and Thy staff shall comfort us, and the valley of the shadow of death shall be but a way into heaven. Dry the tears of sorrow ; lead the blind by a way that they know not ; comfort all that mourn, and thus do Thou continue and complete the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The will of the Lord be done. Hallelujah and hosannah be unto the Name of the Lord. Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Thy kingdom come, O King of kings ; Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven, O Thou whose will is always good. Hear us in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and when Thou hearest, Lord, forgive. *Amen.*

CXC.V.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM xix.

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thy hand has been put out towards us in great richness of love ; Thou hast withheld no good thing from us ; Thou hast spread our table morning, noon, and night ; Thou hast been round about our dwelling-place as a defence ; Thou hast kept the storm from destroying us, and Thou hast given Thine angels charge concerning our life. Therefore we come unto Thee with a new song upon our lips, and a new gladness in our hearts. Meet us, we humbly pray Thee, according to the urgency of our need, our pain, and our desire. We have done the things we ought not to have done, there is not a finger upon our hands that has not sinned against Thee, and Thou knowest, in numbering the hairs of our heads, that our sins are more in number than they. Our way has been broadened out for the society of evil, and our souls have been shut up so as to exclude the light of the good. We will not seek for words of self-defence, nor try to build up a high wall to shut out the judgments of God. We fall down before Thee, and in tearfulness, contrition, and penitence, say, God be merciful unto us sinners.

Enable us, amid the sin and sorrow of the world, to fix our eyes upon the uplifted Cross and upon the Son of God,—then shall the light thereof break upon us like a morning long delayed, and in our souls there shall be all the comfort of Thy peace. The Lord hear us, answer us, and bless us for the sake of Christ Jesus our Lord.

*" Jesu, my Lord, my God, my all,
Hear me, blest Saviour, when I call ;
Hear me, and from Thy dwelling-place
Pour down the riches of Thy grace :
Jesu, my Lord, I Thee adore ;
Oh, make me love Thee more and more.*

*" Jesu, of Thee shall be my song ;
To Thee my heart and soul belong ;
All that I have or am is Thine,
And Thou, blest Saviour, Thou art mine :
Jesu, my Lord, I Thee adore ;
Oh, make me love Thee more and more."*

Amen.

CXCVI.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xvii. 1-8.]

FATHER IN HEAVEN, we rejoice that Thine eyes are upon us continually night and day. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those who put their trust in Him. All things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Help us to say in all the circumstances of life, Thou God seest me,—then the wilderness shall be a garden, and our faith and love be steadfast in God. Help us to believe in Thy nearness, in Thine oversight, in Thy tender providence; enable us to know all the sweet meaning of the words, The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. And again—The very hairs of your head are all numbered. And again—Your Father which is in heaven seeth in secret. Help us to believe all these sacred truths. May we treasure them in the memory of our heart, may we live upon them as upon daily bread; thus shall we be made strong for all the duty and all the sorrow of life. We bless Thee again and evermore for the gift of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ our Saviour. We need Him in the midnight of self-reproach; we need His Cross in the time of accusation, for we charge ourselves with wickedness, with disobedience, and with disloyalty of heart. We hear Thy voice, Thou loving, mighty Father, saying, O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help. Thou didst pity, Thou didst come to save; the Cross can lift up earth to heaven: this is our confidence, and this our confidence is our daily joy.

*" O Jesu, Lord, most merciful,
Low at Thy Cross we lie;
O sinner's Friend most pitiful,
Hear our bewailing cry.
We come to Thee with mourning,
We come to Thee in woe;
With contrite hearts returning,
And tears that overflow.*

*" O gracious Intercessor!
O Priest within the Veil!
Plead, for each lost transgressor,
The Blood that cannot fail.
We spread our sins before Thee,
We tell them one by one;
O, for Thy Name's great glory,
Forgive all we have done."*

Amen.

CXCVII.]

[Scripture Reading: ISAIAH XXXV.]

ALmighty God, open our eyes that we may see. We cannot see Thee with the eyes of the body, but with the vision of the soul we can look upon God and live. We are tortured by what we see with our eyes; we cannot understand it, nor put it together, nor find music in it by aught that our hands can do: if we could see Thee with our hearts we should say, All things are working together for good; everything is under the hand and control of the Eternal Father. If, therefore, we ask Thee to open our eyes that we may see, it is that our faith may be enlarged and perfected in love, so that we shall have no more fear or sense of coming danger, but shall live tranquilly, lovingly, hopefully, assured that, let the day bring with it what it may, if it be woeful, disciplinary, chastening, it will be but for a moment, and after that moment of pain all Heaven's love and light and rest and music shall be ours.

Teach us that the Lord reigneth, and that He will do all things well; and in this confidence may we possess our souls, lest we should imagine that the wrath of man worketh the righteousness of God: may we be strong, and therefore quiet; full of faith, and therefore full of rest. Come to us as we need Thy coming. Where there is darkness, say Let there be light, and lo, a bright day shall dawn upon the soul that has sat in the gloom of fear: if any have strayed away from sacred vow and holy memory, and have forgotten God, may they be touched to the quick, and brought back again to the Cross, and see God through their tears. Let the sweet gospel of Christ and His Cross be the music of our life, the inspiration of our courage, our confidence when heart and flesh do fail. *Amen.*

CXCVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM xxxvi.]

WHO is like unto the Lord, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Let us offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put our trust in God. O Lord our God, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth! Thy Son our Saviour has taught us to call Thee Our Father. As children, we now come before Thee in the Name of Him who is not ashamed to call us brethren. Thou art mindful of man with lovingkindness, and Thou visitest the son of man that Thou mayest crown him with glory and honour. Thou fillest our house with light, and even in the darkness Thou dost spread our table. All the night long Thou hast watched over us. Thou hast defended us when we could not defend ourselves. Thou hast brought us from sleep as from the grave, and set before us the new life of another day. With the Eternal Spirit within our hearts, we shall not fear what man can do unto us; the rough places shall then be made plain, and crooked places straight, and the high places shall be made low, by reason of Thy strength. This day we would walk with God, even with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. To Christ we look evermore, because He only is our light and our salvation, and He only can break to us the bread of life. Let our religion flow through all our thought and conduct, and express itself in sympathy and helpfulness. The sick man asks for healing, and the poor man cries for aid; may we show our religion and our thankfulness in blessing all who need our love, and in carrying the spirit of the Cross to those who live in darkness and fear.

Grace be unto us, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Peace be to the brethren, and goodwill towards men. *Amen.*

CXCIX.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM CXXV.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, help us to put our trust in Thee, without keeping back any part of our love; then shall our rest be full, and our peace shall be without a ripple. When we put our trust in our own strength we become the victims of weakness; but when we run unto the Lord as unto a strong tower, and hide ourselves in the secret place of the Almighty, then are we saved from every fear, and our joy is great and pure. Help us from this time forth, and every day that we have got to live upon the earth, to put our trust in the living God, who would have all men to be saved. Help us to look for God, to live for Him, to cry out for the Living One, night and day: may our souls have no rest until they find Thee, their Maker, Preserver, and Saviour.

Help us to live our little day industriously, faithfully serving God, reading our duty in the right book, approaching it in the only sufficient strength, and then laying the whole service of our life upon Thine altar as unworthy in itself, but all worthy in the Name and the blood of Jesus Christ the Saviour. When we have done all, help us to put our hand upon our mouth, and to put our mouth in the dust, and to say, Unprofitable servants. Thus work in us the true modesty, the infinitely beauteous self-renouncement which Thou dost love, which Thou wilt account unto us for righteousness. So shall our life be simple, true, earnest, full of fire from heaven, beautiful with the comeliness of Christ, perfect with all the beauty of God. Thou hast given unto some five talents, to others two, to others one: help each to work according to his first dower, and to bring Thee the double of it in the day that is to come. To this end may we be faithful, every one working all the hours of the light, and working not as hirelings, not as servants even, but as true, loyal, loving friends. God bless us in His Son. *Amen.*

CC.]

[*Scripture Reading*: ISAIAH lix.]

FATHER OF SPIRITS, be pleased to make us wise unto salvation through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. May we see that Thy love is from eternity, yea from everlasting to everlasting, the one security and the one glory of the universe. Wherein we have misunderstood Thy salvation, gently correct us, and give us Thine own idea of this ministry of recovery; show unto us that it is operating everywhere; that Thou wilt have no death, no imperfection, no waning age; Thou wilt have everywhere immortality and perfectness and youthfulness. May we live in this conception of things, lest we give way to circumstances, and become victims where we ought to be conquerors: help us to enter into the very spirit and purpose of Jesus; then in us there shall be no death, no hunger, no sense of pain, but a real deep eternal enjoyment of the Divine presence. Guide us in all the way of life; help us to know when to walk on the right hand and when to walk on the left; give us that delight in truth and beauty and music which shall create for us an intermediate heaven even now amid the cloud and wind and cold and winter of this earth. Lord, come to us according to the variety of our need, and show us that the arms of the Cross of Christ stretch from sky to sky, and that there is no soul that need die of darkness or hunger or despair. Pity all little natures, all selfish plotters, and look with the disapprobation that means destruction upon all wrong-doing and wrong-plotting and mischief-making. Hasten the time when there shall be no selfishness, when we shall be lost in the love of God and the love of Christ. To this end we pray for the outpouring and realisation of the Holy Ghost. Hear our cry, uttered at the Cross, and whilst we tarry within the shadow of that shameful Tree, may we have the answer of Heaven in great peace and joy of heart. *Amen.*

CCI.]

[*Scripture Reading*: MALACHI iv.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thy day is terrible, yet is Thy day glorious. Thou dost come as a burning oven to those who are wicked, and as a Sun of righteousness to those who fear Thy Name. We would behold the goodness and the severity of God; we would remember that God is love, we would not forget that our God is a consuming fire. Give us to know somewhat of Thy righteousness and of Thy goodness, that we may fear the Lord, and love Him, and daily serve His cause in all the way and trouble of our life. May we not be blind to Thy righteousness; may we not trust presumptuously to Thy mercy; when we see Thy righteousness in all its terribleness, show us Thy love lest we perish in despair; may our song be of mercy and judgment: thus shall we know our Lord, and our hearts shall swell as with young love, and our whole life shall exult in the renewing of Divine power in the soul! Help us to know that the way of God is a mystery of love; sometimes a mystery of darkness, but the darkness is in ourselves; clouds and darkness are only round about Thee, they are not in Thee; God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne. When Thou dost rebuke it is in mercy, when Thou dost tear men to pieces it is that on the third day they may return and be healed. We worship at the Cross of Christ; righteous is the Lord in the Cross, and loving beyond all our thought; we behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world: He is our Priest, our Saviour, our Daysman; He says for us what we cannot say for ourselves; He lays His hand upon God and His hand upon man, and He intercedes for us. Blessed One, take up our prayers, purify them at Thine own Cross, offer them with Thine own breath; then shall the answer be a reply of comfort and of peace. *Amen.*

CCII.]

[Scripture Reading : 1 PETER V. 1-11.]

*" O Lord, how happy should we be,
If we could cast our care on Thee,
If we from self could rest;
And feel, at heart, that One above,
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
Is working for the best.*

*" How far from this, our daily life!
Ever disturbed by anxious strife
By sudden, wild alarms:
O could we but relinquish all
Our earthly props, and simply fall
On Thine almighty arms ! "*

ALMIGHTY GOD, show us in what a mystery we are living every day ; teach us that we know nothing of ourselves about this mystery, that all the action of it is in Thine hand, and that only as we come to Thee through Jesus Christ, greatest mystery of all, can we be at rest in the Lord. We are full of wrath ; we are not tranquil, because we are out of the Divine system of things ; we do not fall into its line, we do not move according to the music of its action, we set up independent sovereignties, we do not fall before the sceptre of the Lord. Oh that we could simply fall into Thy hands, and rest there, and say, Thy will be done ! The worst of us would then be in heaven. Oh that we could simply fall into God's almighty hands, and say, The Lord's will be done ! There would then be no pain in suffering, the night would be full of stars, concealed suns, only waiting for the right time to shine forth in cloudless glory. But we murmur, we set up our idolatrous selves, and fall down before our own image. Oh that we could simply fall into God's own hands, and say, God's will be done ! We could then have no enemies ; though they formed weapons against us they could not prosper ; the Lord would be in us, and the Lord would bless us with peace. This we know by the teaching of Thy Son our Saviour, who loved us and gave Himself for us, and who is now our Intercessor, praying our prayers over again, and making them prevalent through the mystery of His blood. The Lord hear us when we name the Name of Jesus. *Amen.*

CCIII.]

[*Scripture Reading* : JOHN iii. 25-36.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou knowest that we are still in the flesh, we are of the earth earthy, as truly as we are of the heavens heavenly; Thou knowest the struggle of life, every day we are in battle; there is no hour that has not its bitter controversy: sometimes our own right hand is against us, sometimes our right eye is an offender against our soul. We carry our enemies within us, and these must be subdued: they cannot be brought under control but by the mighty power of God the Holy Ghost. We would not have our passions extinguished but sanctified, we would be stronger for righteousness than ever we have been for iniquity; wherein we have lifted up our voices in unholy song, we would lift them up more sweetly and loudly in the praises of our God: sanctify us body, soul, and spirit. Help us to do all our work spiritually, lovingly, and thus successfully. May we see the larger meaning of all things, no longer looking upon life as belonging to this day or that; but looking upon it as part of God's eternity, may we rise, obeying our call of God, and doing the work of every day as becometh souls that are immortal. Sanctify all our sorrow: it is very bitter in the drinking; through Thy great mercy may it bring health with it. Thou canst work out this mystery; it is in Thy power to make our poverty our wealth, our desolateness the beginning of our enjoyment; Thou canst even make the wilderness to blossom as the rose. We would hide ourselves in God; we would abide under His wings; under the shadow of the Almighty would we find our heaven. We always turn to the Cross of Christ: it lifts up all prayer, it brings all heaven near, it opens every line that leads to eternity, and the blessedness of those who are on high. At the Cross we pray, at the Cross we leave our prayer and receive our answer: the Cross is heaven. *Amen.*

CCIV.]

[*Scripture Reading* : ISAIAH lviii. 1-11.]

ALMIGHTY GOD our Father in heaven, known to us in and through Jesus Christ the Son of God, undertake for us in all the way of life. We are constantly deceived by what we see, we mistake the scorpion for the egg, we do not know what we look upon as it really is in its inmost meaning and issue; we are blind, and cannot see afar off; we know not what is on the right hand or on the left; but if Thou wilt shine within us, and speak to us every morning and every evening, our life shall be an unfolding beauty, our steps shall move straight onward to the sky, and every step shall be as music. We cannot live as orphans; for then we have no strength, no hope, no inward lasting life, but we could live eternally as little children, known of God, and loved of God, and nourished from on high. We would be God's little children. What manner of love hath the Father bestowed upon us, that we should be called sons of God! We have the spirit of adoption, we know how to say Father with the heart, and the very saying of it is its realisation. This is the miracle of the Holy Ghost, and for it we thank God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Save us from ourselves, and lead us to the Cross, the altar of sacrifice, the place of blood, and there, trusting in God with our whole soul, we shall hear what heaven means, and see all the shining of the guiding light. Bless all ministers of the everlasting gospel, all teachers of wisdom, all leaders of wise reform: let the blessing of God abide with us, at home and abroad, in sickness, sorrow, trouble, and joy; yea, until the mystery of this little life be solved in the light of heaven.

*" Lord, as to Thy dear Cross we flee,
And plead to be forgiven,
So let Thy life our pattern be,
And form our souls for heaven.*

*" Kept peaceful in the midst of strife,
Forgiving and forgiven,
O may we lead the pilgrim's life,
And follow Thee to heaven!"*

Amen.

CCV.]

[*Scripture Reading*: JOHN ix. 1-11.]

OUR GOD AND FATHER, Thou dost watch over us, and constantly demand what we do for Thee. Thou dost not send us out to work for one hour, but for the whole day, though there be twelve hours in it. Thou dost look for service that is good and faithful, and such Thou wilt abundantly reward. We have failed in every duty; our obedience has been marked by reluctance, we have not been filled with sacred passion when we have undertaken the service of the Lord; we have proceeded about Thy work with indifference, sometimes with carelessness; our lips have not been touched with a live coal from off the altar of heaven, and our hands have hung down in weariness even early in the day. We are unprofitable servants; wherein we have done aught, it is but our duty we have done; we have not risen to the agony of sacrifice; we have not been carried away by a passion and enthusiasm of love; we have not offered ourselves upon the altar of God with willingness and without reserve. God be merciful unto us sinners! From this day forward may we know the Lord, and obey His commandments, and walk in all His way with steadfastness of heart. To this end we pray for a double portion of the Holy Spirit, without whom there is nothing good, and nothing that hath in it duration and unchangeableness. We pray our prayer now and always at the altar of the Cross. May this day be bright with goodness; may all the hours of the day be so many opportunities for rendering service to God and to man; then at eventide there shall be light, and the darkness itself shall be a blessing hardly disguised. The Lord hear us, pity us, give us lifting up of soul and nobleness of purpose; and then after long useful service call us to eternal rest. Hear us, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for we pray at the Cross. *Amen.*

CCVI.]

[Scripture Reading : JOHN XX. 1-21.]

*"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within."*

*"Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus we know, and He is on the throne."*

*"Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging
round?
On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found."*

*"Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and
ours?
Jesus has vanquish'd death and all its powers."*

*"Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away?
In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they."*

*"It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace."*

GREAT peace, O Lord, have they that love Thy law. There is no peace to the wicked. The Lord Christ Thy Son gave peace unto His Church, saying, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. We have not because we ask not, or because we ask amiss; there is no lack with God; the river of God if full of water. If we would ask abundantly, and ask at the Cross of Thy Son, wouldst Thou keep back anything that is good for us? We are Thy children, and Thou dost not forsake the work of Thine own hands. Thou wilt not lose any soul that puts trust in Thee; none shall pluck out of the Father's hand even one little child. In this confidence we would live every day, in this trust would we meet all the trials and all the difficulties of life. We would not meet life in our own strength, for we have none; we would encounter everything in the Name and love and fear of God as known to us in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

We bless Thee for the manifoldness of Thy coming, for the wonderful variety of Thy self-revelation: may we have eyes that can see God in flower and star, in all the waters that flow, and in all the birds that sing, eyes that can see Him under the snow of winter as well as in all the glow and pomp of summer. Help us to live the few days that make up our life, so few that a child may count them; yet may we so live those few days as by the power of Christ to find in them a door that opens upon immortality and heaven. *Amen.*

CCVII.]

[Scripture Reading : ISAIAH lxiii. 1-9]

ALMIGHTY GOD, it is our joy to know that there is One that thinketh of us moment by moment. Thou lovest us every one. Sometimes it is hard to understand Thy love ; now again it comes to us with a sharp rod, or with a dark frown, it is love nevertheless : love digs the grave at our feet ; love puts out the fire at which we were warming our hands ; this is truest love, this is the love that comprehends all things, and whose issues are eternal and infinite. We do not understand our own love : how can we understand the love of God ? Help us to receive into our heart the simple truth that God is love, and may we live upon it, and trust to it, and hold on to it, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Herein we would abide, for here is our ground made for us by Him whom we adore as the Saviour of the world. He hath revealed the Father to us : He taught us to call Thee by the name of Father. This is the miracle of the Lord Jesus. This is the triumph of life through death. Thou hast given us all we have : if Thou hast put anything into our right hand or into our left hand it is of Thy grace, and not of our own deserving : we have deserved nothing but desertion, punishment, darkness. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound. This is the wonder of the Cross—Cross of the Eternal Son, Cross of God our Saviour. We will not look any more to our sin, we will look to the Cross, to the Lord Jesus Christ, to the mystery of atonement which our mind can never master, but which our heart can always feel. Lord, accept us in the Beloved ; fill us with God the Holy Ghost, and even in time may we begin to know the meaning of eternity. Whilst we are yet on the earth may there be round about somewhat of the light and the sweetness and the music of heaven. *Amen.*

CCVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: 2 CORINTHIANS xii. 1-10.]

*"Let me but hear my Saviour say,—
Strength shall be equal to thy day;
Then I rejoice in deep distress,
Leaning on all-sufficient grace.*

*"I glory in infirmity,
That Christ's own power may rest on me:
When I am weak, then I am strong,
Grace is my shield, and Christ my song."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou dost guard Thy people against fear; Thou wilt not have their hearts made afraid. Jesus Christ is our Paraclete; He will not allow the enemy to overrun us; He comes to us with comforting speeches, with most tender and helpful gospels, and when we hear His gentle voice we are strong, and can say unto Him, O Christ of God, Thy gentleness doth make us great. We need all Thy comforting words, for the darkness comes down upon us suddenly; the enemy is always active; we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against powers we cannot see, influences we cannot measure, ministries that never tire: we need the strength of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that we may mightily withstand the assaults of the evil one. Nor is Thy strength denied to us; Thou dost say Thy grace shall be made perfect in the hour of our trial, Thy strength shall be consummated in our weakness, so that we may be enabled to say, when we are weak, then we are strong; when we have nothing, we abound in riches. We bless Thee for all the bread we have eaten in secret, and all the water we have found in the wilderness and the desert: these things are God's gifts; we receive them in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in that same Name we bless the invisible, the infinite Giver. Lead us day by day. Enable us at all times to hold ourselves at Thy bidding. Be with us in the house and in our place of business; be with us in all the walks and engagements of life, and when we have done Thy will and suffered it, when we have been purified and chastened through all the ministry of the Cross, bring us, we pray Thee, to the land where there is no death, because there is no sin. *Amen.*

CCIX.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM lvii.

*"God, my supporter and my hope,
My help for ever near,
Thine arm of mercy held me up,
When sinking in despair.*

*"Were I in heaven, without my God
'Twould be no joy to me;
And whilst this earth is mine abode,
I long for none but Thee."*

ALmighty GOD, our life stands in Thy goodness, we are surrounded by Thy mercy, verily we live and move and have our being in God. Show us, we beseech Thee, that Thou art not a God far off, but a God nigh at hand, yea, within us, nearer than our own breath, and our own life, without whom, indeed, we could not live. We are of yesterday, and know nothing; we close our eyelids, and behold we are blind in a moment, we cannot stretch beyond the length of our arms, we are barred and caged in little lives that are watched; to-morrow we die, and the third day are we forgotten as if we had never been. It well becometh us, therefore, to hold our peace, to look on in silence, and to wait hopefully for the grand last revelation.

Pity our littlenesses and infirmities: some we cannot help, some are our very selves, and without them men would not know us. Whilst thou dost pity what is little, pardon what is sinful with all the pardon of pardons which Thou hast treasured up in the all-forgiving heart of Christ.

We commend one another to Thy tender care. The Lord help us as we kneel before Thee. Thou knowest the secret desire of each heart, the solemn purpose of each life: Thou knowest the sting that pierces the heart, the burden too heavy for mortal strength, the fear that deepens into dejection, the hope that is fleeing away. Thou knowest our family life, our business difficulties—our whole estate is known to Thee. The Lord undertake for every one of us according to our heart's necessity, and multiply unto us His grace, so that beyond all our want there may be an overflow of Divine love. *Amen.*

CCX.]

[Scripture Reading: JEREMIAH xxxiii. 1-16.]

*" 'Come unto Me, ye weary,
And I will give you rest.'
O blessed voice of Jesus,
Which comes to hearts oppressed,
It tells of benediction,
Of pardon, grace, and peace,
Of joy that hath no ending,
Of love which cannot cease.*

*" 'Come unto Me, dear children,
And I will give you light.'
O loving voice of Jesus,
Which comes to cheer the night.
Our hearts were filled with sadness,
And we had lost our way,
But morning brings us gladness,
And songs the break of day."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, give us to feel that we are coming to a King, that therefore we may open our mouth widely, and utter large petitions: for who can tell the riches of God? Thou dost give without being impoverished: if Thou didst withhold, Thou wouldst be none the richer for the keeping back; we therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, and freely ask of God in Christ Jesus all we need and keenly desire. Look upon us as we are now gathered around the altar, and give to each a Father's blessing, like a flower from the gardens above. Thou knowest what we need most—Lord, give us that! we could tell Thee what we want, what we desire; but we will not talk our ignorance in Thine hearing, otherwise we should offend God: we will ask Thee to read our lives, to see where necessity most presses, and to answer not the desire of our heart, but the purpose of Divine love; then, whether Thou dost give darkness or light, it shall be well: whether Thou dost smite us with a rod, or kiss us with the kisses of Thy mouth, it shall be well; we shall say by the grace given unto us, Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight.

Wherein we would be better, wherein we would pray and praise and serve, or wait with loving patience, God's holy Name be praised, for this is the miracle of the Cross. Heal our sick ones, comfort the comfortless, bring back the wanderer, and give us all to feel that the Lord reigneth, that our Father on high has everything in His own hand; and there may we rest and trust. *Amen.*

CCXI.]

[Scripture Reading : EPHESIANS i. 1-14.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we will not forget Thee in all the engagement and labour of life. To forget Thee is to forget the light, the music, the centre, and fountain of our being. Thou hast not forgotten us; day by day Thou hast come to us with new messages, new hopes, new consolations; to-day we feel loaded with benefits. We have nothing that we have not received; the signature of God is upon all that we hold that is for our advantage and comfort. Thou art the living God, the Father of us all; Thou dost pity us, Thou dost save us; Thine is not a sentiment of love, but a great act of redemption. Thy love means the Cross. May we not misunderstand Thy love; it is not a sigh or a tear, or an emotion coming and going; it is a redemption, a sacrifice, an uplifting of the Cross of Christ. Upon that Cross Thou hast written above the superscription of Pilate, Herein is love. We stand in Christ Jesus our Lord; we are built upon Him as upon a sure foundation-stone; we have in Him all that we need for education and comfort and progress and strength and coronation; He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last; filling all time, all space, yea to overflow, so that heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. Yet how gentle He is, how large in love, how tender in sympathy, how near to help! We linger where Christ lingers; the opening of His mouth shall be as the dawning of a day; His voice is full of music; His look is a revelation; we will not go away, because to go away would be to turn towards desolation. Lord, abide with us!

*"I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's
power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with
me."*

*"Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the
skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain
shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me."*

Amen.

CCXII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM cvii. 1-15.]

FATHER IN HEAVEN, we have heard that Thy mercies are over all Thy works. We know this to be true in our own lives: goodness and mercy have followed us all our days; they have been round about us, above us, and within us, and as to their presence we have no doubt: for such goodness and such mercy God's holy Name be praised day by day. We come to Thee through Jesus Christ Thy Son; He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We come by Him boldly to the throne of grace, that there we may find acceptance, and grace to help in every time of need. Every moment brings its own necessity; in Christ Jesus every necessity brings its own reply: we would live, therefore, this day, and every day, in Christ the Lord, and have no confidence but in the Eternal God. Grant unto us Thy Holy Spirit that we may abide in this faith, and work out all our life under the influence of this love. We pray for one another. Life is to some a great burden; some have never seen the sky through tearless eyes; their days have been days of trouble, pain, weakness, disappointment; everything seems to be wrong; whatever they touch withers away: the Lord grant unto such the comforting of His own Spirit; Thou wilt know what to say to such hearts; we cannot tell how to speak to them, for they are quite beyond our reach. Help us to sympathise with those whom we cannot aid in any other way, for our sympathy shall be help if tenderly spoken. Lord, help us during our few remaining days; we began with but a handful, and now the handful has almost slipped away; a few remain, let us make them all golden.

*"Saviour, when in dust to Thee,
Low we bend the adoring knee;
When, repentant, to the skies
Scarce we lift our weeping eyes;*

*"O! by all the pains and woe,
Suffered once for man below,
Bending from Thy throne on high,
Hear our solemn litany."*

Amen.

CCXIII.]

[Scripture Reading: EPHESIANS vi. 10-18.]

ALmighty God, our Father in heaven, fill our minds and hearts with the promises of Thy word, may they dwell richly in us, filling up every necessity, chasing away all darkness, and giving us the blessed assurance that they that are with us are more than they that be against us. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, we wrestle with spiritual powers: therefore we come and hide ourselves in the almightiness of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thy grace is sufficient for us: Thou canst make the wilderness as a garden, Thou canst sanctify sorrow, loss, trial, and make even darkness itself fruitful of goodness to them that love Thee. We would have no will of our own, we would say, Not our will, but Thine, Father in heaven, evermore be done: Thy will is love, Thy meaning is love, the end of all our trial and training is love. Towards that happy consummation may we grow silently, surely, constantly, and in the growth there shall be many a hint of heaven. For all Thy love, and care, and patience, how can we praise Thee sufficiently? Thou hast nurtured us and defended us, and been round about us a perpetual defence from the beginning; and Thou wert never nearer to us than Thou art to-day. In this confidence of love and light we stand. At the Cross we learn how to pray. Lord, help us. The way is long, and the hill is steep, and the wind is often high and cold: but on the hill is heaven. Help us in this sweet anticipation to accept all the weariness and toil of the road, that at last we may be with God.

*"Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee;
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee—
Nearer to Thee.*

*"There let the way appear
Steps unto heaven;
All that Thou send'st to me
In mercy given:
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."*

Amen.

CCXIV.]

[Scripture Reading : ISAIAH iv. 1-7.]

ALmighty GOD, we would not only be pardoned, we would be pardoned abundantly, so that, by the fulness of Thy grace, our sin might be lost, forgotten in a great forgiveness. We bless Thee for this word of pardon. This is a Gospel word ; it is the Gospel of Thine own heart ; it is the message of Thyself. We confess ourselves to be sinners, yea, criminals, who have broken the law and despised the heavenly grace and turned away from all the welcomes of heaven. We reproach ourselves with bitter accusation ; we would not spare our disobedient and ungrateful hearts. We would puncture them through and through with the sword of just reproach, and whilst we are submitting ourselves to this necessary pain, send Thy word of pardon down from heaven. Heal us ; bind up the broken heart ; restore unto us our souls, and make us glad, for Jesu's sake. He came to save us ; He loves us. May He come to us ; hold converse with us, and so speak to us as to bring our hearts into confidence with His own, that we, being lost in His grace, washed in His blood, animated and inspired by His Spirit, may enter into the liberty and joy of Christian sonship. Help us to live our little life better than we have yet lived it ; teach us that any betterness is impossible, except under the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit. Lord, give us Thy Holy Spirit, and He will burn up all evil with fire, and give us strength to do the right, discernment to choose between the bad and the good, and courage of heart to follow the Cross wherever it goes. Come to us, we beseech Thee, and whisper Thy pardon and peace to each heart.

*" God of pity, God of grace,
When we humbly seek Thy face,
Bend from heaven, Thy dwelling-place :
Hear, forgive, and save.*

*" And whate'er our cry may be,
When we lift our hearts to Thee,
From our burden set us free :
Hear, forgive, and save."*

Amen.

CCXV.]

[Scripture Reading: MATTHEW xi. 20-30.]

*" Give to the winds thy fears;
Hope, and be undismayed;
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head.*

*" Through waves, and clouds, and storms,
He gently clears thy way;
Wait thou His time: so shall this night
Soon end in joyous day."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Father of all souls, why do we trouble and weary ourselves, when we know Thee to be our Father? What is this spirit of unrest that troubles us, and makes our life a torment, when it ought to be, by the fulness and tenderness of Thy grace, a deep joy, a bright and cloudless hope? Why will we take our life into our own hands that we may shape it and use it according to our own will? It is Thy life, not ours; ours only to hold for Thee, and to account for to Thee day by day and at the last day. Fill us with this holy thought: it shall give us rest, it shall make us quiet in the very centre of the storm; it shall ennoble our whole thought and give the heart the sacred treasure of peace. We would no longer be our own masters; we would fall into the hands of God and say, Thy will be done, for Thy will is wisdom, and Thy will is love. This is the Lord's prayer, this is what the Lord taught us to say: Not my will, but Thine, be done. This is the Gethsemane cry; this is the cry that God will hear. Listen to us when we say, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. The Lord wash us and cleanse us, and make us pure through the blood of sacrifice—the Lord's Spirit dwell within us like a flame of fire, the Lord's truth be with us, a continual wealth. Dry the tears of sorrow; stay for a while the sigh of weakness and discontent; give Thy children release from the pursuer; may they know what it is to live, and move, and have their being in God, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one Priest, the only Saviour, the eternal Redeemer. *Amen.*

CCXVI.]

[Scripture Reading: ROMANS v. 12-21.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we know the power of death, and in Christ we would know the power of life. We know what it is to be dead in love, dead in hope, and dead in thankfulness, dead in the very soul: may we now know what it is to live in faith, in love, in thankfulness, in service; may the mystery of life triumph over the mystery of death; may we enter into the meaning of that saying, that life and immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel; may there no more be any death in us, may each believer in the Lord be enabled to say, The bitterness of death is passed: Christ hath abolished death; there is now no death to them that love the Cross, there shall be but a brief sleeping time, and then an awakening amid the music of heaven.

We daily see how great a gift is life; we know it not, we have not seen the Divine secret, we feel the pulse beat, but we see not the power by which it is moved. We are our own mysteries. Life itself is a religion. Life is a continual prayer. How weak we are, yet how strong! We cannot just now bear the full daylight, yet we shall pass the sun on our upward way to the glory to come, and his great lustre shall be as a spark vanishing in the ever-enlarging vastness of Thy universe. When we think thus of Thy kingdom our light affliction is but for a moment. Thy kingdom, Lord, how great, how bright, how strong! May we one and all have a place in that everlasting home. Thy mercy is greater than our prayer, and therefore do we hope even where we cannot reason. Thou God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, assure us of Thy pardon through Jesus of Calvary.

*"Jesus, in Thy dying woes,
Ever while Thy life-blood flows,
Craving pardon for Thy foes:
Hear us, Holy Jesu."*

*"Saviour, for our pardon sue
When our sins Thy pangs renew,
For we know not what we do:
Hear us, Holy Jesu."*

Amen.

CCXVII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: JOHN xix. 28-42.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, do Thou send unto us, day by day, some message that shall make our life upon the earth stronger and more beautiful. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Thou wilt not neglect the life which Thou hast created. Thou didst not shape us in Thine own image and likeness that we might be cast away. That Thou hast created us is a pledge that Thou wilt redeem us and sanctify us, and make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus we reason concerning Thy providence and Thy purpose of love, and we know and are sure that Thine affection towards us is everlasting. Thy mercy endureth for ever; every house in history has said so. We gather now around the altar to repeat the statement: we would turn it into a holy song, and say in speech and music, His mercy endureth for ever. We cannot live but in the mercy of God: there is no life in our own endeavours: true life can come from the Cross of Christ alone. To that Cross we daily look; on that Cross we would share the sufferings of our Lord; by the power of that Cross we shall exceedingly glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation has a mission to work out patience and perfectness in the life Divine. Thou knowest the mystery of our nature. Thou understandest every passion; yea, there is no fire in us that Thou didst not Thyself kindle. Look upon us pitifully with Thine eternal kindness, and draw us to the Cross, that we may see how great a Saviour we have, how great soever our sin. Say to us in despondency, and fear, and self-hatred, Where sin abounded grace doth much more abound. And receiving this truth into our very spirit, we shall be the free sons of our Father. Deliver us from all that is selfish; transfigure us into the likeness of the second Adam the Lord from heaven. *Amen.*

CCXVIII.]

[*Scripture Reading*: HEBREWS X. 11-27.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou art slow to anger, but we are swift to do that which is evil. Because Thy compassions fail not, therefore do we rebel against Thee with a high hand and with an arm outstretched. Judgment is Thy strange work, mercy is Thy delight. We come to Thee now with songs of delight far above all words to utter: a love that has no speech because of Thy lovingkindness and Thy tender mercy. Thou hast stooped very low to find us, Thou hast lighted the house and swept it diligently to find the meanest piece that was lost. We were as sheep gone astray, now we are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, and safely enfolded upon the high mountains of Israel, we will be glad in the Lord and praise Him with a new song.

Bless us, we humbly pray Thee, in the Name of Jesus Christ the Priest and Saviour of the world, with daily revelation of truth, and daily delight in Thy wisdom. Wean us from all forbidden things, overcome the fascinations of time and sense with some mightier attraction of Thine own, set up Thine own kingdom in the heart, and be our one Master. We would be slaves of Thine, we would be captives of the Lord, we would be bound hand and foot, head and heart, by the chains of Thy love, and seek no other liberty than the range of Thy will and purpose. For this desire we bless Thee: it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

We have done the things which we ought not to have done; we have left undone the things which we ought to have done, and our lamentation is a sorrow that should have no end. But ere we have completed the tale of our shame, Thou dost interrupt our confession with assurances of love and pardon. This is Thy wondrous way; this is the very mystery and glory of Thy love. *Amen.*

CCXIX.]

[Scripture Reading: 2 TIMOTHY i. 1-14.]

*"Brief life is here our portion;
Brief sorrow, short-lived care;
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life, is there:"*

*"O happy retribution!
Short toil, eternal rest;
For mortals and for sinners,
A mansion with the blest!"*

ALMIGHTY GOD, what is our life but a little dream? Yet if we be in Christ Jesus Thy Son our life is the beginning of immortality. It doth not yet appear what we shall be; it is enough for us to know that when Christ who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory, and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Here and now we see nothing as it really is; we look upon appearances which constantly deceive and mislead us: by-and-by we shall see life in its reality, truth in all its range, holiness in all its glory. If our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In the hope of realising this higher citizenship we would live our life upon earth industriously, honourably, devoutly, and usefully. Take from us the spirit of impatience and fretfulness; give us the spirit of resignation and contentment; then shall our life be a continual feast, then shall we see beauty and hear music everywhere. The Lord's light be round about us this day, the Lord beset us behind and before, and lay His hand upon us; the Lord show us the meaning of the Cross as we have never seen it before: may we be supported by all its tenderest love, may we be sustained by its unspeakable grace, may we be saved by its ineffable atonement. Into Thy hands we commit our spirit; into Thy keeping we give all for whom we ought to pray. The Lord constitute us members of His own household, and bring us at last, one and all, no wanderer lost, to the fair land of heaven, God's own eternal summer.
Amen.

CCXX.]

[*Scripture Reading*: ROMANS viii. 1-14]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we cannot tell what our life is but as Thou dost show it to us day by day, and give us explanations of it as its events pass before us in troubled confusion. Our life is a pain to us without Thee, but with Christ it becomes a light, a joy, the beginning of eternity, a foretaste of heaven. Jesus, abide with us, break our bread, and let the breaking of it be a revelation of Thyself. Lead us through the wilderness, and we shall know naught of famine of bread or of water; deliver unto us Thy testimonies, and our souls shall not famish for need of food. We bless Thee for the revealed God in Christ: He is Emmanuel, He is God with us, He is the revelation of the brightness of Thy person. Help us to look upon Him with the eyes of our love and to direct to Him the whole expectation of our desire, and may we draw upon the sufficiency of His grace, knowing that He gives grace upon grace, wonder upon wonder, even until our capacity overflows by the bounteousness of His donation. Regard us as those who are immortal, and yet upon whom is written the condemnation of death. Regard us as those who are struggling against the flesh, and who yet are overborne and all but destroyed by its cruel pressure; and thus do Thou, remembering our frame, have compassion upon us and great pity, and cause us to live in Thy mercy. We bless Thee for the agonies of the soul, for yearnings, and desires, and longings, and outlookings which betoken and confirm our divinity. Thou hast made us so wondrously, mysteries to ourselves: so abject, so august; ready to die, yet unconquerable in vitality. Truly we are fearfully and wonderfully made; the only answer to our life is in the infinity and eternity of Jesus Christ. Wash us in His most precious blood. Draw us nearer to Thyself, keep us in Thy mighty hand. *Amen.*

SECTION II.
PRAYERS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

“That it may please Thee to succour, help, and comfort, all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation ;

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

That it may please Thee to preserve all that travel by land or by water, all sick persons, and young children ; and to show Thy pity upon all prisoners and captives ;

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

That it may please Thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless children, and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed ;”

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

That it may please Thee to aid and bless all pastors, teachers, and comforters of weary hearts ;

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

“That it may please Thee to have mercy upon all men ;

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.”

THE FIRST FAMILY PRAYER.

GRACIOUS FATHER, we beseech Thee to look upon us now that we are for the first time offering Family Prayer at the throne of mercy. We bless Thee that we have had the courage to undertake this sacred duty, and we pray that it may become one of our sweetest privileges. Having erected our altar in the Name of Jesus Christ, may the fire upon it be ever burning, and may it be our supreme joy to meet together in this way to make common prayer and supplication unto our gracious Father. May we never fail in this duty. To this end we pray Thee to grant unto us the Holy Spirit that He may abide with us, and evermore stimulate us in heavenly directions. May we never yield to any temptation to abandon this privilege. May we ever find time for the enjoyment of this sweet communion. From the family altar may there go forth throughout the whole household a purifying and ennobling influence which we shall all feel and acknowledge to be sent from heaven. We pray for every member of the household, that each may be blessed, comforted, and directed by Thyself, according to the circumstances of each day. May the light of heaven abide upon this dwelling. May the Name of Jesus Christ the Eternal Saviour of the world be ever held in adoration by all belonging to this house. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, come to us, abide with us, and make the place of our dwelling glorious with heavenly light. We give our lives, our business, and all that concerns us into the hands of our Father, and we rest assured that no good thing will be withheld from us if under the power of the Holy Ghost we strive to do His will. *Amen.*

[Scripture Reading: PSALM lxxxvi.]

AN INVOCATION.

*" My God, the spring of all my joys,
The life of my delights,
The glory of my brightest days,
And comfort of my nights !*

*" In darkest shades if He appear,
My dawning is begun !
He is my soul's sweet morning star,
And He my rising sun.*

*" The opening heavens around me shine
With beams of sacred bliss
While Jesus shows His heart is mine,
And whispers,—I am His."*

FATHER OF OUR SOULS, we come once more to Thee, to think of all Thy ways, and ask Thee for all we need. We turn to Thy word that we may learn what we ought to be, and to do, for Thy word alone can shed upon us the true light. Thou hast told us to love the Lord our God, to walk in all His ways, and to cleave unto Him. Lord Jesus, send upon us the Holy Spirit, that we may keep this law with all joyfulness of heart. Thou hast charged us to follow Thee only in so far as we know Thee to be good, saying by Thy prophet: If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve. Lord, we know Thee to be good and true altogether, infinite in wisdom, and glorious in holiness. Help us evermore by the power of the Eternal Spirit to let our eyes look right on, and our eyelids look straight before us, yea, help us to ponder the path of our feet, that all our ways may be established. Hast Thou not given exceeding great and precious promises to them that put their trust in Thee? We hold such promises as true riches. The Lord shall be with the good. Wait on the Lord and keep His way, and He shall exalt Thee to inherit the land. He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved. These are Thy words. They are sweeter than honey, yea than the honeycomb. In accepting their comfort help us also to obey their spirit,

that so we may not eat Thy bread, and forget to do Thy work.

Blessed Saviour, may we continue in Thy word, that we may be Thy disciples indeed. If we so continue by the power of the Holy Spirit we shall prevail before God in prayer. If ye abide in Me, and My word abides in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Help us day by day to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. Lord, these are our desires, hear them at the Cross, and graciously fulfil our petitions, then shall we walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. Let not our sins keep Thee away from us, yea, rather, let them draw Thee the more closely to us that we may be saved. We will think of our great High Priest when the hand of the enemy is sore upon us. Seeing that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we would hold fast our profession. Now we leave ourselves in Thy hands. It is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men. We do not come to the mount that burned with fire, but to the place called Calvary, where the mighty Saviour died for the world's salvation. Lord, help us this day. Lord, be very near us. Lord, be more than ever precious to our souls.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and for ever. Blessing and honour, and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever.
Amen.

FOR A BIRTHDAY.

(MAY BE USED AT FAMILY WORSHIP.)

Another birthday come !
The soul's Creator praise,
Who draws us to eternity
Through all our length'ning days.

What is my life on earth—
What but a going home ?
My Saviour, hold me by my hand,
Nor from Thee let me roam.

I seek the life beyond,
The birth that cannot die—
The immortality of love,
The perfectness of joy.

In every vanished year
I see the love of God :
Henceforward I would ever keep
The way my Saviour trod.

J. P.

[Scripture Reading: MARK X. 13-16.]

BAPTISM.

*" See Israel's gentle Shepherd stand,
With all-engaging charms;
Hark! how He calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in His arms.*

*" 'Permit them to approach,' He cries,
'Nor scorn their humble name;
For 'twas to bless such souls as these
The Lord of angels came.'*

*" We bring them, Lord, in thankful hands,
And yield them up to Thee;
Foyful that we ourselves are Thine;
Thine let our offspring be."*

FATHER IN HEAVEN, we pray Thee to bless all the little ones in this house and in every house. They are Thy little ones, not ours. They all belong to Thee by right of creation; Thou art the Father of us all. They know not the meaning of prayer, but thou knowest the meaning of our love, and we desire Thee to fill up that meaning in the lives of the darlings. May every house rejoice because of Thy goodness to the children; may every family be one in love, one in trust, one in hope. Thou art the God of the families of the earth; baptize us every one, not with water only, but with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. May we love one another with pure hearts; may we help one another with willing hands; may it be our daily joy to do some good for somebody else. Thus may we live in the love of Jesus, and at the end we shall see the brightness of His glory. We take up our little one, and ask Thee, Jesus, to lift the child into Thine own arms, and to bless it; then it shall be rich for evermore.

Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

[Scripture Reading: EPHESIANS V. 22-33.]

MARRIAGE.

*" O Saviour, Guest most bounteous
Of old in Galilee,
Vouchsafe to-day Thy presence,
With these who wait on Thee ;*

*" Their store of earthly gladness
Transform to heavenly wine,
And teach them, in the tasting,
To know the gift is Thine."*

GOD be gracious to the loving souls one in truth and trust, living in one another as in a solemn mutual joy. Be present at the wedding, Jesus, as Thou wast at Cana in Galilee, and give all the guests plentifully of Thine own wine. May our dear ones understand one another more and more, be helpers of one another's faith, and fellow-heirs of the heavenly estate, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Save them from all needless sorrow, and especially prevent them from making their own trouble. May they be wise, simple and pure in thought, hopeful and generous in spirit. May their home be precious to Thee and to themselves, a sacred dwelling-place, a sanctuary of love and peace. When trouble befalls them, may they seek Jesus and tell Him all. In time of joy, may they double their gladness by looking towards heaven in thankfulness. May no root of bitterness spring up to trouble our dear ones, and never may their hearts turn away from their Father in heaven. God bless the families that are most deeply interested in this happy event. May old age be forgotten in new hopes, and may all holy resolutions come to abundant fruitfulness. For sweet home life we bless Thee. For the family altar we thank Thee as for a very present help in time of trouble. For all the joys of the household we praise Thee as for our chief riches. May grace, mercy, and peace rest abundantly upon those for whom we specially pray, and be granted unto us one and all. *Amen.*

THE WEDDING RING.

THE FAMILY,—a tragedy within a wedding-ring ;
Within so small a hoop : yet in God's fair heaven there is nought
more.

Yea in heaven's shadow there palpitates no keener pain.

Here the coo of infancy—the soft babble older than words,—
The foam of life's new wine.

Life opens in the summer sunshine of the house—
Opens like buds—swells into blossoms—
Runs its course till harvest-time.

The boy all ardour : the beginning of a hero : the promise of a man
The sweet girl—mighty in weakness—treasuring

A thousand hopes ; her dreams outrunning time.

The mother gathering up her yesterdays and wondering
By what mystic touch the pain was turned to joy.

The old man bending on the friendly staff—
Annotating youth's rippling laughter with dumb reflection.

All this within the hoop,—the hoop so small.

Out of what larger circle was it struck ?

Too proud for diamonds—disdaining pearls—
Complete in its simplicity.

In gold, a hoop ; in love, an Eden ; in hope, a heaven—
A symbol of eternity.

In that blest prison, love finds blest liberty.

J. P.

PARENTS PRAYING FOR CHILDREN.

FATHER OF US ALL, we meet as parents, that we may together pray for our beloved offspring. Our hearts' desire and prayer to God is that our children may be saved. Thou knowest the variety of their dispositions, and the peculiarity of their circumstances, and we pray Thee that according to all that is distinctive of them Thou wouldst order Thy blessing to rest upon their lives. Some are gentle, some are wayward, some are of a bright spirit, and some are of a fearful heart: all these things Thou knowest, and Thou wilt order Thy blessings accordingly. We pray for those who are very young, that their little lives may be spared, and that they may come up to the fulness of life, growing not only in stature, but in wisdom and pureness. Some are so frail that we almost fear their inability to reach the estate of manhood; Thou wilt not break the bruised reed, nor wilt Thou quench the smoking flax. We take up our weakest ones, and ask Thee, O Christ, to receive them into Thine arms. Some are going forth into the world to endure its sufferings, and carry its crosses, and discharge its duties; we especially pray for them that they may be directed from on high. May all tender home memories go with them as a protection in the day of sore trial. Watch over those whom we may no longer see, and may they and we together work faithfully in all the ways of life, and finally see our reward in Christ Jesus, the loving Lord, whose servants we are, and on whom we would wait continually. If we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more wilt Thou give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Thee. For that Holy Spirit we ask Thee now. Give not the Holy Spirit by measure unto us, but fill up the whole range of our life with Thy Divine presence. O Thou living and loving One, help us to be patterns and examples to our

children ; help us to control ourselves in their presence ; assist us so to do all the work of life that they will think of us as honourable parents. May we leave our children no heritage of shame ; by all nobleness of conduct may we leave them the wealth of a high and beautiful example. Who is sufficient for these things ? Our sufficiency is of God. We can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. May we know ourselves to be children of the Eternal Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. We would be no longer as those who are without comfort, orphans in the world, whose way lies through cloud and darkness ; we would know ourselves to be members of the household of faith, and to belong to the family of God ; then we shall have bread to eat that the world knoweth not of, and sweet comfort which cannot be taken away from us. Forgive us wherein we have done wrong ; pardon us wherein we have erred through excess of temper, or through foolishly indulging our children, or through doing anything that is forbidden by Thy law ; and from this day forth may we be wise, gentle, patient, long-suffering, and tenderly kind to all who look upon us with the trust of young life.

We pray our prayer in the Name of Him who is the only begotten Son of God, the Child of Bethlehem ; the Man of Calvary, our dear and infinite Saviour. *Amen.*

CHILDREN LEAVING HOME.

FATHER IN HEAVEN, we beseech Thee now for our child who is leaving the family circle, and is about to mingle with strangers. Keep our loved one, we humbly pray Thee, from all temptation, and every form of danger, and keep alive within him [*her*] all the tenderest home memories that can cheer and strengthen the young

heart. May father, and mother, and home be treasured as sacred words ; and when the spirit sighs for old associations, be Thou very near, that the enemy take not advantage of momentary weakness. Give our child insight into character, lest those who are plausible should win unsuspecting confidence which they intend only to betray. For our loved one we pray the daily guidance of the Holy Spirit, that blessed memories may be preserved, and sacred vows may be remembered and fulfilled. Grant that we may often see one another as the years come and go, but if Thou dost order otherwise, then grant unto us a sure and blessed confidence, that through our Saviour Jesus Christ we shall meet where separations and farewells are unknown. God bless the child, always dear to us, but never so dear as at this trying moment. We leave our child in Thy hands, for the child is Thine. If Thou wilt hear our prayer we shall always say, It is well with the child. We pray in the Name of Thine only begotten Son, our blessed and glorious Lord.
Amen.

CHILDREN PRAYING FOR THEIR PARENTS.

[Why should not the children sometimes go by themselves to pray for their fathers and mothers? Let the children meet together in a room, and the oldest of them read this little prayer once a week. I have thought of children ranging in point of years from five to fourteen.]

DEAR FATHER IN HEAVEN, we ask Thee to bless our father and mother, and to make them good and strong and wise and happy. We thank God for our dear home ; but our house would not be home if it were not for our father and mother. We want them to live a long, long time, and to be very joyful. Dear Saviour, help us children to be good, then father and mother will be happy. We want to love Jesus, and to do what He tells us. When it is

hard to do, we pray that Jesus will help us to do it. We know He will, because He said so. Bless father, bless mother, bless us all, and may we always live in a happy home. We say all this in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. *Amen.*

A PARENTAL SOLILOQUY.

HAVE I faithfully done my duty to the children, or have I allowed them to grow, and act, and think, just as nature or accident might have it? If I have neglected the seed-time, how can I expect to reap the harvest? Have I carefully distinguished between the various dispositions of my children, or have I treated them as if they were all alike? Am I not responsible for the conduct which grieves me? Had gentle and wise training been begun early enough, might not all the trouble have been saved? Have I not sometimes mistaken easiness for affection, and in this way have I not consulted my selfishness rather than my duty? Is it true love to the child to let the child have its own way? Am I not really laying up a rod for my family in after years? I will even now seek heavenly direction that I may recover, if possible, part of what I have foolishly lost. Lord, hear me when I pray for a double portion of Thy Holy Spirit, that I may be wise in the discharge of parental duty. Make me thoughtful, tender, discriminating, and reasonable. May I be the companion of my children, and draw towards me all their confidence and love. God be pleased to bless my house, and make it His dwelling-place. Saviour of the world, take charge of us altogether, and work out in our lives Thy blessed will. I ask for wisdom. I pray for understanding. Lord God the Holy Ghost, hear me whilst at the Cross I pray for the lives that are dear to me beyond all others. *Amen.*

A SOLILOQUY.

WHAT is the meaning of this longing for something beyond—this keen dissatisfaction with the things that are seen? Is it an ambition that is meant to be humbled and quenched, or is it the assertion of my immortality? Whether should I strive after great and splendid possibilities, or stoop to the little things, the daily tasks that are around me, and try to make them noble and beautiful? The simplicity of life may be its true romance. In straining after some great thing, I may omit the plunge that would cleanse my soul from leprosy. On the other hand I must guard against those shallow satisfactions which leave the hunger of the soul untouched. Why should great questions be shirked? Why should I stand outside the temple when I might go into the innermost shrine and see the tenderest visions of beauty? Why live in noise when I might dream in music? Was the eagle meant to be bound by bars of steel? His wings are the answer. His eyes in all their weird shining proclaim that space itself is almost too small for energy so tremendous. And is the soul of man without wings? Is there not a pulse in the human heart that challenges and defies the sharpest arrow of death? I carry the answer within me. My soul is at once the enigma and the solution. Lord, help me truly to live. Saviour, help me to baffle and disappoint every enemy that would keep me from Thyself. I fly to Calvary. I make the Cross my resting-place.

*"Jesu, my strength, my hope,
On Thee I cast my care,
With humble confidence look up,
And know, Thou hear'st my prayer.
Give me on Thee to wait
Till I can all things do,
On Thee, almighty to create!
Almighty to renew!"*

*"I rest upon Thy word;
Thy promise is for me;
My succour and salvation, Lord,
Shall surely come from Thee.
But let me still abide,
Nor from my hope remove,
Till Thou my patient spirit guide
Into Thy perfect love!"*

Amen.

FAMILY CONFERENCE IN TROUBLE.

AS a family we are now in great trouble. Let us look at the case, and find out what is best to be done. Are our hearts to fail, or are we to seek new strength from God? What has God been to us in the past? Are we able to set a number to His mercies, and to say, Thus much hath the Lord done for us and no more? Certainly we cannot do this. Then is it not our duty to believe that God who has done so much for us in the past will mercifully preserve us in the future? Our suffering is great, but how small it is when compared with the sufferings of others! Men have suffered the loss of all things for Christ. The Apostles gloried in tribulation. But what have even Christians suffered compared with what Christ Himself endured? If we shut out of view the sufferings of others we magnify our own trouble; but if we look upon the trouble of other hearts we may see how comparatively small is our own. What, then, are we to do? Are we to give up prayer, or are we to pray more than we have ever done? We are in a great battle, in which we must either conquer or die. Let us first have a time of real heart-searching and find out what is wrong in ourselves, then let us flee humbly and hopefully to the Cross of Christ. This is not a time for surrender. In such circumstances as ours we may really glorify Christ. He is watching us. He Himself was made perfect through suffering. He was tried in all points like as we are. He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Now is the time for decision. Christ seems to be standing before us patiently awaiting our answer. Lord, help us. Lord, send light from heaven through our darkness. Behold us as a family bowed in prayer; remember Thy former lovingkindness, and come and save us. Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A FAMILY ADDRESS.

(INTENDED TO BE OCCASIONALLY READ ALOUD.)

WHAT is our influence as a family upon the people who are round about us, and especially upon those with whom we come into daily contact? Many who do not know us take notice of us, and may be influenced by what they see. Are we doing good or evil in this neighbourhood? Are we vain, extravagant, frivolous, and worldly? Are we tempted to live above our means, and to become the victims of outward appearance? We ought to consider and answer such questions if we wish to live wisely and usefully. Love of mere appearance always leads to ruin. Debt is always a burden, and may easily become a disgrace. We have no right to go into debt. If we have only a pound a week we should live within our income. Let us have no fellowship with the foolish people who would rather beg than work. Whatever is honest can never be mean. If the work is not dignified in itself we should dignify it by the way in which we do it. It is more dignified to wash a floor than to write a begging letter. Do let us as a family resolve this very day to encourage ourselves and others in living economically and usefully.

As a family are we patient and affectionate towards one another? Are we gentle with old age? Are we patient with infirmity? Do we wait for the slow and the weary? As the time will soon come when we shall be scattered, we should so live that when that time does come we shall be rich in tender memories about one another. If we have done wrong in the past let us this very moment forgive and forget it all for Christ's sake. We may have spoken hastily; we may

have been obstinate and peevish ; we may have been selfish or ungenerous ; at this moment let us seek God's forgiveness, and pray for grace to help us in time to come. Lord Jesus, give us the tender heart and the forgiving spirit.

What good are we doing in the world? Are we sympathetic and charitable? Do we ever send anything to the sick and the poor? Are we eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame? Do we spend all our money upon ourselves, and give nothing to the cause of Christ? We should try so to live that we shall be missed by the poor when we die. All good-doing is self-rewarding. They who give shall get. What is seed at one end, is crop at the other. There is that scattereth abroad and yet increaseth ; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty. Why should we not now resolve to give to others as God may have prospered us? He that giveth to the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and He will pay him again. It will be to our lasting disgrace if it should appear on examination that we have expended much on indulgence, recreation, or pleasure, and little on the necessities of the Church and the poor. Lord, give us an open heart, a willing and liberal hand, and to this end fill us with the spirit of the Cross. May our house be as a house of mercy in this neighbourhood.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, the fellowship and comfort of the Holy Ghost, be with us as a family, uniting, purifying, and strengthening our hearts. *Amen.*

[Scripture Reading: PSALM li.]

CONTRITION.

*"Show pity, Lord; O Lord, forgive,
Let a repenting rebel live;
Are not Thy mercies large and free?
May not a sinner trust in Thee?"*

*"My sins, though great, do not surpass
The power and glory of Thy grace:
Great God, Thy nature hath no bound,
So let Thy pardoning love be found."*

O LORD MY GOD, pity me, for my soul is ill at ease. Saviour, come to me in the time of heart-break and darkness. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight. I have no excuse or defence; I bow down before Thee in shame and confusion of face, and cry, God be merciful to me a sinner. The enemy came upon me and suddenly overwhelmed me. He took my soul unawares, and carried me away as with a flood. Yet am I guilty before God, for my soul consented unto the evil, and the sin was as a sweet morsel in my mouth. God help me. God be merciful to me a sinner. When I thought my passion was dead, it did but slumber, and in a moment it burned with fury. What shall I say but God be merciful to me a sinner? I will tarry at the Cross for salvation. I will cast my soul on Jesus. I will look up through my tears that I may see His face. Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me. Where I have done wrong, may I endeavour to make restitution. Save me from the selfish coward's prayer, and make me strong to do my duty. May I never forgive myself, but henceforward walk in self-distrust and in humbleness of mind. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Lord, forsake me not. Jesus, abide with me. Lord, have me always in Thy holy keeping. I am no more worthy to be called Thy son, yet I pray Thee give me some humble place in my Father's house. Pity me, Jesus; pity me and help me, for my soul is in sore distress. *Amen.*

[*Scripture Reading* : MATTHEW XXVI. 38-42.]

SICKNESS AND DEATH.

FATHER, we bring our sorrow before Thee, because Thou alone canst heal it or turn it into joy. Our child is ill, and we want the illness to be cured. That is our heart's desire. Lord, this is in very deed the precious favour that we seek at Thy hand. We are disquieted in soul, and our trouble is very great. The child is dear to us; the young life is the very sunshine of our house. Think, O Father, of the ruin of our home if the child should be taken from us. Thou knowest our frame; Thou rememberest that we are but dust. Thy love will not destroy us. In Thy love we put our humble confidence. Lord, spare the child! Lord, comfort our breaking hearts! We want to say, Nevertheless, not our will, but Thine, be done. Oh, how hard to say! Yet is not our sorrow in some degree selfish? Do we really love the child when we pray that he [*she*] may be kept out of heaven? Oh, how bitter is this cup! Christ, help us to endure this agony. In our great sorrow we would lean against Thy Cross. We pray for the faith that can say, All is well. We ask for this great miracle. Forgive the tears that blind us, for in their very bitterness we find a sweet and tender joy. Say unto us, Sorrow endureth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Now, God bless the dear sufferer. Temper the wind to the shorn lamb. Gather the lambs in Thy bosom, O Shepherd of souls. Thou knowest all the rest we would say if we could. Lord, read our hearts. Lord, see all the meaning of our tears. Send an angel to strengthen us in this time of darkness, in this hour of bitter grief. Precious Saviour, to whose great love ours is nothing, we leave our child in Thy gentle hands.
Amen.

DEATH CONFRONTED.

I HAD an interview with Death.
The place, a lonely dell, winter-bound, swathed in spotless snow.
The time, new-risen morn, the last star paling
As if in fear, retired but not extinguished.
A spirit strengthened me to brave the enemy of life,
And gave me courage to upbraid his cruelty.
My speech I do remember well, and Death's reply.

Said I, in heightened tone, as if to keep uncertain
Courage steadfast and ardent: "Monster, of thee
No man speaks well: thy silent tread makes
The house tremble, and in thy cold breath all
Flowers die. No little child is safe from
Death's all-withering touch: nor mothers
Dost thou spare, nor lovers weaving life's story
Into coloured dream, nor saints in lowly prayer.
Why not content thyself with warring and succeeding
In the gloomy jungle? Smite the tiger crouching
For his prey, or the lion in his fierceness,
Or fly after the panting wolf, or lodge
An arrow in the heart of the proud eagle:
Why devastate our homes? Why kill our little ones?
Why break our hearts and mock our thirst
With the brine of useless tears? O Death! I would
That thou wert dead."

Then Death answered me, and filled me with amaze.
"Believe me," said the weird defendant, "thy reasoning
Is false, and thy reproach an unintelligent assault."

His voice was gentle, and through all his pallor
There gleamed the outline of a smile. I saw
Transfigured Death!

"I am God's servant. The flock must be brought home.
I go to bring the wanderers to the fold.
The lambs are God's, not yours ; or yours but to
Watch and tend until He sends for them.
Through your own fatherhood read God's heart.
Through your own watching for the child's return
Conceive the thought that glows in love divine."

He paused. Said I: "Could not some brighter
Messenger be sent? An angel with sunlight in
His eyes and music in his voice? Thou dost
Affright us so, and make us die so oft in
Dying once. If our mother could but come : or some
Kindred soul ; or old pastor whose voice
We know :—any but thou, so cold, so grim !"

"I understand thee well," said Death, "but thou dost not
Understand thyself. Why does God send this cold snow
Before the spring? Why icebergs first, then daffodils?
My grimness, too, thou dost not comprehend.
The living have never seen me. Only the dying
Can see death. I am but a mask. The angel thou
Dost pine for is behind. Sometimes angel-mother,
Sometimes father, sometimes a vanished love,
But always to the Good and True the very image of the
Christ. No more revile me. I am a vizored friend."

The dell was then transformed. The snow gleamed
Like silver. The day a cloudless blue. And
Suddenly living images filled the translucent space.
And then I asked of Death if he could tell whence
Came they? And he said : "These are mine.
A reaper I, as well as shepherd. I put in the sharp sickle : I
Bound the sheaves : I garnered the precious harvest :
And when I come angels sing, 'Harvest home,'"

J. P.

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xc.

DEATH.

ALmighty God, enable us to say, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the Name of the Lord. Thou knowest how hard it is for us to say this in the presence of death. Thou canst teach us that death is abolished ; its sting is taken away ; and the victory of the grave is spoiled. Give us quietness for a while that we may recover ourselves from the dizziness of this great sorrow. Suffer us not to become the prey of the enemy when our strength is as nought. Thou knowest how temptations may now easily assail us and overcome us, but we will put our trust in the living God. Teach us that the life that has been taken away was Thine before it was ours, and can only be truly ours as it is truly Thine. Take out of our sorrow all selfishness. May we not sorrow as those who have no hope ; but through our very tears may we see the beauty of the way of the Lord. Thou wilt not be wroth with us very sore when our hearts are broken within us and our spirit fails for fear. Thou knowest our frame, Thou rememberest that we are but dust, and Thou wilt order Thy way to us accordingly. Into Thy hands we commend one another for comfort and guidance and support. Enable us in all things to give thanks unto God, and to cast all our care upon Him. Lord, carry our burden for us this day. Sanctify to us the loss which we now mourn. May we be the richer for it in Thine own good time. The Lord reigneth ; in this holy thought would we put our whole trust, that we may enjoy the peace which passeth understanding : may that peace guard our hearts and our thoughts in Christ Jesus. Lord, look upon us as we take our way through the world, and let Thy thoughts towards us be thoughts of pity and love.
Amen.

[Scripture Reading : PSALM xxxix.]

THE DEATH OF A MOTHER.

*"Thou art gone to the grave; but we will
not deplore thee,
Though sorrows and darkness encompass
the tomb:
The Saviour hath passed through its portal
before thee,
And the lamp of His love is thy guide
through the gloom!"*

*"Thou art gone to the grave; but we will
not deplore thee,
Whose God was thy Ransom, thy Guardian,
and Guide!
He gave thee, He took thee, and He will
restore thee;
And death has no sting, for the Saviour
has died!"*

LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, clouds and darkness are round about Thee, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne. Thou hast been pleased to take away the mother of the family, and behold how desolate we are in Thy presence. How mysterious are Thy ways, and Thy judgments are past finding out. It is hard for us to say that all things work together for good, yet we pray for such a baptism of Thy Holy Spirit as will enable us to say, Not our will, but Thine, be done. Our hearts are full of grief. The house is empty and cold, and all our tenderest associations are rent and overwhelmed. The life we loved so tenderly has gone away from our earthly vision; help us to believe that it lives in brighter worlds, and is awaiting our release from the bondage of time. Say unto us, Yet but a little while, and there shall be a coming together again of friends, parents, families, and under the inspiration of this hope may those of us who remain upon earth diligently and honourably do our duty assured of Thy blessing at the last.

We thank Thee with fervent hearts for all the sweet and tender memories left behind by the mother whose ascension we now mourn on our own account. The memory of the just is blessed. Through the tomb of our loved ones there comes a fragrance as of heavenly flowers. We would go also and see the heavenly places prepared for those who love God; yet if Thou hast work for us yet to do, and suffering yet for

us to endure, help us by the power of Thy Spirit to accept Thy will and to fulfil it with all earnestness, patience, and contentment. The Lord pity us in our great sorrow. The Lord make up to us in some degree the great necessity which has been created in our lives. Specially grant unto us Thy Holy Spirit that we rebel not against Thee by foolish murmuring. Where we cannot yet sing we can be silent in wonder and in adoration. Thou knowest all that is in our hearts, all our pain, sorrow, and sense of loss; Lord, come to us in Thy great mercy; Lord, help us in Thy great strength. We pray our prayer at the foot of the Cross. *Amen.*

[*Scripture Reading: REVELATION xiv. 13.*]

BEREAVEMENT.

ALMIGHTY GOD, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life, in whom whosoever believeth shall never die, we bless Thee that we sorrow not as those without hope, but by Thy grace through our tears we can say, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord. Help us to bear the stroke; give us light, even in darkness; and in the dreariest of all silence may we hear Thy voice speaking in our hearts. Thou dost take away, and none can hinder; Thou dost close Thine ear to our appeal, and on tired eyes there softly lies the stillest of all slumbers. This is Thy doing, and we may but weep and wonder, and then with resignation say, It is well: it is better with those who have gone than with those who remain: they have gone forward to coronation, while we remain to plough and sow, in all winds and weathers, and to be stung with life's keen pain. The Lord help us. Father, Thy will be done. *Amen.*

[*Scripture Reading*: REVELATION vii. 9-17.]

PRAYER IN WIDOWHOOD.

LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, Thou hast been pleased to take from me the staff of my life, the light of my eyes, and the joy of my heart, and to plunge me into all the emptiness and sorrow of utter desolation. Yet Thou hast promised to be the Husband of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless. Thou hast said, Let thy widows trust in Me. Enable me, I beseech Thee, to say with all my heart, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord. Thou knowest how hard is my lot, how lonely is my way, how dark is the prospect of my life. As Thou knowest all things, so wilt Thou order Thy grace and Thy blessing accordingly. I pray to be lifted up above all fear. May the spirit and the power of darkness be unable to prevail against me. In six troubles Thou hast been with me, in seven Thou wilt not forsake me. When the poor and the needy seek water, and their tongue fails for thirst, Thou the Lord wilt hear them, and find water for them. Tremblingly, yet hopefully, I look unto the hills whence all true help cometh. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, may Thy comforts delight my soul. When I am sore and weary, and utterly stricken down, do Thou, merciful Father, come to me through Jesus Christ Thy Son, and lift me up, revive my hope, and strengthen my confidence in Thy goodness. Lord, hear me, Lord, pity me. Spirit of the living God, abide with me, and fill me with divinest and tenderest comfort. Give

me hopes of renewed fellowship, and fill my memory with all those sacred passages of Thy Holy Word which are specially intended to cheer and strengthen broken hearts.

*" When our heads are bowed with woe,
When our bitter tears o'erflow ;
When we mourn the lost, the dear,
Jesus, Son of Mary, hear !*

*" Thou our throbbing flesh hast worn,
Thou our mortal griefs hast borne,
Thou hast shed the human tear :
Jesus, Son of Mary, hear !*

Amen.

ALONE WITH JESUS.

*" O Sacred Head ! now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down ;
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thy only crown !
O Sacred Head ! what glory,
What bliss till now was Thine !
I read the wondrous story,
I joy to call Thee mine.*

*" What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered
Was all for sinners' gain ;
Mine, mine was the transgression,
But Thine the deadly pain.
Lo ! here I fall, my Saviour !
'Tis I deserve Thy place ;
Look on me with Thy favour,
Vouchsafe to me Thy grace."*

HOW dare I look upon Him? Every wound He bears is a wound of my infliction. Other wounds than those of the body I have made in His heart. All His commandments I have broken. I have made too often a mere convenience of Him. In calling Him my Saviour, I have thought of Him as delivering me from punishment rather than as calling me to obedience and suffering. My very piety thus becomes an aggravation of my sin.

But all this thought may be wrong. I should look to Jesus as my Saviour, not as my Judge. By-and-by He will as Judge call me to His bar, but just now as Saviour He calls me to His Cross. Not to condemn me but to save me did my Lord come. I will not look at my own littleness, but at Christ's greatness. I have nothing to do with myself but to bring myself to Jesus. Blessed Saviour, hear me, touch me, speak to me, and give me to feel that sorrow as well as joy is one of Thy ministers. *Amen.*

[Scripture Reading: PSALM ciii.]

NEW YEAR.

*" Father, let me dedicate
This new year to Thee,
In whatever worldly state
Thou wilt have me be.
Not from sorrow, pain, or care
Freedom dare I claim;
This alone shall be my prayer :
Glorify Thy Name.*

*" If Thou callest to the Cross,
And its shadow come,
Turning all my gain to loss,
Shrouding heart and home;
Let me think how Thy dear Son
To His glory came,
And in deepest woe pray on,
Glorify Thy Name."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou dost make all things new. Thine is this new year. Every day Thou dost make the morning new; the sun is always new to us by reason of the mystery of light. We cannot tell what wonders Thou dost work and must work, for there is no searching of Thine understanding, and there is no end to Thy strength. Thou dost always surprise us, and yet round about all Thine actions is the venerableness of eternity. Thou knowest nothing of the present dying moment, Thou dwellest in the eternal NOW; things are new to us because we are so young and poor and utterly inexperienced, though oftentimes we vainly call ourselves old, and count up the long bead-roll of our yesterdays. So foolish are we : we are of yesterday, and know nothing ; our breath is in our nostrils, we are consumed before the moth, we are driven away before the high wind. Lord, so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Help us to renounce what we call our age, our experience, and our sagacity, and to trust ourselves to Thy great word, Thine infinite wisdom, Thy sacred and redeeming love.

Bind us to the Cross, keep us near Golgotha; may the way, the dolorous way, be known to us every one; may we hide our sorrows in the infinite woe of Christ; and as for our sin, may it be plunged in His blood and never be found again.

Amen.

NEW YEAR.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM xxviii.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, art Thou not known unto us by all sweet and tender names? Thou art Shepherd and Friend, and Father, and Defender; Thou art our Comforter and our Guide, our Sun and our Shield. Thou dost come down to us in all such names that we may the better understand Thee and lay hold upon Thy strength and trust in the mystery of Thy love. Thou art known amongst men for Thy compassions, Thy mercies which are tender, and Thy kindnesses which are loving. Not only dost Thou number the stars, Thou dost bind up the broken heart; not only dost Thou ride upon the wind and make the clouds the dust of Thy feet, Thou healest our diseases, Thou forgivest our sins, Thou art pitiful to our infirmities. We understand Thee in Thy goodness; we come quite near Thee in Thy love. We may not enter into the light and stand there with open vision, nor may we look upon Thy glory; but Thou dost permit us to see Thy goodness, to drink of the cup of Thy mercy, to look upon the beauty of Thy grace; and herein are we comforted and strengthened and receive the inspiration of Divine encouragement. It is enough: it is the beginning of heaven; this is the wonderful work of God, that we should be trained little by little, and day by day, reading a line at a time, and coming a step at once towards the perfectness of our manhood. Train us in Thine own way; lead us by the hand. Thou knowest our life—its whole compass and its entire purpose. Oh that we may hide our littleness in Thine infinity, and our ignorance in the omniscience of God! We would not go into the year without Thee: except Thy presence go with us, carry us not up hence. The year will be a blank without Thy blessing; the days will mock us, if Thou dost not set in them

a light above the brightness of the sun; the trouble of the time will overwhelm us, if Thou dost not defend our life. Thus we begin the year. We would that all the year might brighten until the close, so that in winter we might have high summer; and in the hot days brilliant shining of the upper light, and amid all the dying of mere time, the vision, and the comfort of eternity. We know not with what the year is laden; we cannot tell what graves will be dug, nor know we by what surprises of joy we shall be lifted up into thankful amazement. We would not know: our lives are in our Father's hands; we trust the living Christ; we put our confidence in the Cross, knowing that God, who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, will with Him also freely give us all things. Here we build our memorial pillar; here we write upon it our words of thankfulness and love; and, looking onward into the darkness, we are sure we hear the going of Thy feet, we think we see marvellous lights—great stars trembling beyond the clouds. This comes of our faith; this is the music of our Christian hope. Thou wilt not disappoint us or overpower us, if we put our confidence in the Lord Jesus, the Prince of Life, who bought us with His blood. Lord hear us in all these things, and let our desires, breathed at the Cross, be as prayers which are sure of divine replies. In the grace of Jesus we would enter the New Year, and bid each other good-speed in the Name of the Lord.

*" Prince of Life, to Thee I cry;
By Thy glorious majesty,
By Thy triumph o'er the grave,
By Thy power to help and save,
Lord, Thy presence let me see,
Manifest Thyself to me.*

*" Lord of glory, God most high,
Man exalted to the sky,
With Thy love my bosom fill;
Prompt me to perform Thy will;
Then Thy glory I shall see,
Thou wilt bring me home to Thee."*

Amen.

NEW YEAR.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM XXXIV.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, since Thou hast brought us to the beginning of another year, surely Thou wilt show us the light of Thy face, so that through all the coming days there may be upon our life a brightness above the light of the sun. We enter upon the year in this high and sacred hope, our hearts look unto Thee with the eagerness of a great expectation, and they will not be satisfied but with great answers from heaven. This year we desire nothing that is little, we cry mightily unto God for larger revelations of His truth to our hearts, and we humbly desire to become established in all wisdom, grace, and nobleness. Wherein we have done wrong in the past, we would be warned, and we would look unto God for strength to do right in the days that are to come.

Now in the opening light of another year, with humility and contrition of heart, with love and great expectation, we give ourselves into Thy keeping. Thou knowest what is before us: we do not know one step of the road, we never came this way before; send Thine ark ahead of us that we may know the way and put our feet only in sure places. And when we come to the dividing river, broad and deep and cold, the river which men call death, may we touch it with confidence, and may its waters divide before our advancing feet. Destroy within us the enemy of our fear and anxiety, and set up the light of Thy kingdom and the glory of Thy Cross.

May Thy benediction come upon us all; may each one feel the shower of Thy blessing and grace, and may our determination, formed in Thy presence and made possible by Thy strength, be to live a higher and more useful life. We come to the Cross; we look to the sacred blood; we put our trust in the one Saviour alone, Emmanuel, Jesus, Son of man, Son of God. *Amen.*

NEW YEAR.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM xxiii.]

SHEPHERD OF OUR SOULS, we bless Thee that we see a New Year. The days of our years are threescore years and ten, but the years of Thy right hand no man can count. From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God. May we so number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom, lest the night come and find us without God and without hope in the world. We begin the year with a song of thankfulness for the past. Goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our life, and the angel of God hath encamped round about us. We meet at the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ to confess our sin, to seek Thy grace, and to renew our holiest vows. We love the Saviour. He bore our sins and carried our sorrows, and to-day He is our Priest in Heaven. Through all the year we would live with Jesus; we would learn His will, and obey all His commandments.

We give ourselves anew to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Not our will, but Thine, be done. Bless us in body and in soul. Help us to do all our work wisely and honestly. All little children guide and defend. To the sick and the weary send some message of love. Be the light and strength of our home, and may our house be Thine, O Thou who art the God of the families of the earth. Even at Thy throne of grace we wish each other a Happy New Year, and good success in the Name of the Lord. Jesus, still lead on. We would not go one step without Thee. To Thee we all belong by right of purchase, by right of love.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, the fellowship and comfort of the Holy Ghost, abide with us until time be lost in the years that are at God's right hand. *Amen.*

NEW YEAR.]

*"Into the hand of Him who died,
Who evermore doth live,
This strange and solemn New Year's path
In trustful prayer we give.*

[*Scripture Reading: PSALM xci.*

*"Enough for us to hear His voice,
To feel His guiding hand,
To know each step is bringing us
Nearer the Better Land."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we begin the year in Thy strength. We know not its mystery; we cannot tell what burdens it bears, what pains it will inflict upon us, what joys it will add to our hearts' delight. We know it not; but Thou knowest it, and for us that is enough. The will of the Lord be done. Thou wilt give us strength equal to our day; Thou wilt make Thy strength perfect in our weakness. It is the delight of the Lord to work miracles in the experience of His people. We will, therefore, trust the year to Thee; come what may, Thou wilt be in its every day and its every moment; the rising of the sun shall be as the opening of Thine eyes, and the setting of the sun shall bring with it the curtain of Thy defence. Hear us, when we bless Thee for all the past and commit ourselves into Thy keeping, in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. We would be faithful to Him in our speech and action; specially would we be faithful to Him in our individual trust and love. We would feel as if the honour of the Cross were committed to us; we would walk before men as those who are called to represent the omnipotence of Divine grace. May we show, therefore, by our spirit and temper, by our cheerfulness and love, by our zeal and activity, that we are the willing slaves of the Lord's Christ, entering into the captivity of His love with all the joy of our hearts. Pity our littlenesses; pardon our great sins; wash us in the holy blood of the one Priest, who died for us and rose again; and, when the last year comes and goes, and we are hidden in the great shadows, may we leave behind us the testimony of a hallowed and devoted life, that we are not dead, but have risen. *Amen.*

[Scripture Reading : PSALM CXIV. 1-15.]

HARVEST.

*" Sing to the Lord of harvest,
Sing songs of love and praise;
With joyful hearts and voices
Your hallelujahs raise;
By Him the rolling seasons
In fruitful order move,
Sing to the Lord of harvest
A song of happy love.*

*" To God the gracious Father,
Who made us 'very good;'
To Christ who when we wandered
Restored us with His blood;
And to the Holy Spirit,
Who doth upon us pour
His blessed dews and sunshine,
Be praise for evermore."*

GIVER OF ALL GOOD, the harvest is Thine, and is Thy gift to the children of men. Thou makest the corn to grow, and the valleys to sing because of abundance. We praise Thee for our daily bread, because it brings us within touch of Thy kind hand, and for our daily help we bless Thee, because it is the pledge of immortality. May we take all Thy bounties with thankfulness of heart, and sing aloud of the goodness of God. Thou art good alike in giving and in withholding. When the harvest is a heap and a day of desperate sorrow, may we be kept from complaining; and when it is plentiful and well-gathered, may we be kept from forgetfulness of God. Thou openest Thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing. God's Name be daily praised! Feed us, we pray Thee, with the corn and wine of heaven. Lord, give us daily of the Bread of Life: we would find all our life's sustenance in the Precious Saviour. Day by day He has compassion on the multitude, and He finds bread for all men in the wilderness. Saviour of the world, we would be daily fed by Thine own hand. As Thou hast brought us from the night to see the day, so wilt Thou take us from the night of death to see the morning of immortality. In this thought we would find this day's joy.

Grace be with us and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

[*Scripture Reading: PSALM xc.*]

THE LAST DAY OF THE YEAR.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we come to Thee at this dying hour of the year, and bless Thee for all Thy tender mercies, Thy lovingkindnesses, Thy patience, and all the pitifulness and care of Thy Fatherly providence. We have nothing that we have not received: the marks of Thy finger are upon every gift that we enjoy, and all we can say concerning the year's history, its deliverances, its triumphs, its sanctified afflictions, is, This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

Behold we stood at the opening year with empty hands, and lo, as the days dawned, Thy strength was given unto us: as the weeks came round, Thou didst give us our portion of power, and because Thy good hand has been upon us we continue until now, the living to praise Thee, the living to hope in Thee for all future time. Our yesterdays are prophets of the to-morrows which are yet to come, and because of Thy tenderness in the past, we will not fear the future, how dark soever the outlook may be.

We come with mourning and penitential confession, and acknowledgment of personal guilt and unworthiness: we have no self-excuse, no self-defence: we will not plead our own cause, we will ask Thee to plead for us—the wounded One Himself shall be our Advocate, and the Heart we have most deeply grieved shall find for us a way of pardon, for we fall into the hands of God in the extremity of our weakness and in the gloom of our fear.

Thy word is our strength and buckler, our shield and song, our sanctuary and our delight—sweeter than

honey, yea, than the honeycomb—a great sanctuary and an invincible fortress. We would hide ourselves in Thy word; we would be at rest in Thy wisdom; renouncing ourselves and all human allurements, provisions, and temptations, we would betake ourselves to the rock Christ—Thy Son, our Saviour, our only Priest. Hidden in Him we shall know no shame and no fear. Lord, take us all; may none be left outside, for there is room in the heart of Jesus Christ.

Bless Thy servants to whom the year has been a time of affliction and loss and grievous discipline. Regard those to whom the year will be a perpetual memory of difficulty and struggle, continuous endeavour to be honourable, and occasional failure in the high pursuit. Remember those who have this year dug their first grave, who have for the first time seen death face to face. Regard those to whom heaven has become this year enriched by happy deaths, by triumphant farewells to earth, and to whom now the heavens will be a perpetual attraction because of the loved ones who are there. And next year may we be better, all better, stronger, wiser; forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel, forgetting all things unpleasant, and disagreeable, and unwelcome; letting them all fall into oblivion never to be restored.

*" Days and moments quickly flying,
Blend the living with the dead;
Soon will you and I be lying,
Each within his narrow bed.*

*" Soon our souls to God who gave them
Will have spread their rapid flight;
Able now by grace to save them,
Oh, that while we can we might !*

*" Jesu, Infinite Redeemer,
Maker of this mortal frame,
Teach, O teach us to remember
What we are, and whence we came;*

*" Whence we came, and whither wending;
Soon we must through darkness go,
To inherit life unending,
Or the death of shame and woe.*

*" Life passeth soon; death draweth near:
Keep us, good Lord, till Thou appear:
For Thee to live, in Thee to die,
With Thee to reign through eternity."*

Amen.

[Scripture Reading : PSALM cxxii.]

SUNDAY.

*"How pleased and blest was I
To hear the people cry,—
Come, let us seek our God to-day:
Yes, with a cheerful zeal
We haste to Zion's hill,
And there our vows and honours pay.*

*"Zion, thrice happy place,
Adorned with wondrous grace,
And walls of strength embrace thee round,
In thee our tribes appear,
To pray, and praise and hear
The sacred Gospel's joyful sound."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, in Thee alone do we put our trust. Our whole heart goes out towards Thee in eager love. We have committed ourselves unto Thee, and Thou art able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the throne. This gospel have we received from Thy Son, Jesus Christ. We owe all we are and have that is good to Him. His blood cleanseth from all sin. His grace establishes the heart, and causes it to grow in all holiness and sacred power. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. We bless Thee for Thy house. The tabernacle of God is with men upon the earth. Thou dost keep us in the right way by the declaration of Thy testimonies and the continual revelation of Thy truth, by the mighty energy of Thy Holy Spirit, and by visiting our hearts in times of anxiety and distress. Thy ministry towards us is a ministry of salvation. Thou art always seeking to train us toward Thyself. Thou dost lift up our life towards the light, and towards the higher and wider spaces. Thou dost give liberty to the captive—an infinite, a glorious liberty, requiring eternity for its unfoldment. Meet with us when we enter Thy house. May we by faith see Thee there. We would look upon Thy goodness; we know we cannot bear

the lustre of Thy glory. Help us to feel Thy grace, to hear the still small voice of animation and of comfort, assuring us that the Lord reigneth, and that the end of all things is good. We bless Thee for all light, truth, peace, hope. These are the great gifts of God. Every day do Thou enrich us with them. Then, at the last, we shall not die, but "languish into life." This is the gospel of Thy Son; this is life, this is immortality, this is heaven. We bless Thee that we must die to live, and that living in Thy light we can never die. We bless Thee for the mystery of love; for the marvel and the miracle of continual grace, and we now give one another in tender love into Thy gracious keeping. Saviour, receive us all. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM xciv.

*"Welcome, sacred day of rest!
Sweet repose from worldly care;
Day above all days the best,
When our souls for heaven prepare;
Day when our Redeemer rose
Victor o'er the hosts of hell.
Thus He vanquished all our foes:
Let our lips His glories tell.*

*"Gracious Lord, we love this day,
When we hear Thy holy word;
When we sing Thy praise and pray;
Earth can no such joys afford.
But a better rest remains,
Heavenly Sabbaths, happier days;
Rest from sin, and rest from pains;
Endless joys, and endless praise."*

IT well becometh us to worship and bow down and kneel before Thee, Thou Lord of the Sabbath, for we are not our own, we are Thine; the very hairs of our head are all numbered, and every life is precious in Thy sight. We are bought with a price; we are ransomed souls; when there was no eye to pity, when there was no arm to save, Thine own eye pitied and Thine own arm brought salvation. We are therefore sealed, we are anointed from on high, the sprinkling and the token of blood may be found upon us, and now we

take oath before the altar to serve Thee with constancy and with love.

We bless Thee for all Thy care ; every moment is a new revelation of Thy mercy, every day is a testament written with Thine own hand, and covered all over with signs of infinite love. Our song is too low and mean to reach the mighty theme it attempts ; behold we cannot praise Thee as we would, were the thunder ours, and the tempests at our command. Receive what we can give ; we mean it to be more than a praise, we would put our heart into every tone, and praise Thee without reserve.

Thou knowest us all ; there is nothing hidden from Thine eye ; do Thou command Thy blessing to rest upon each of us as each most particularly needs. We are before Thee as those who need much, but our much is nothing to Thine infinitude. Thou canst give us more than we ask or think, and make all things' abound to us, out of the fulness that has no end. If any are living a foolish life, caring for that which is outward and little, and on which is the sign of death, may this become the hour of deeper reflection and more serious thought. If any are in pain of heart, Lord, there is balm in Gilead, and there is a Physician there. If any are entangled in perplexities and embarrassments, haunted by griefs and distresses they cannot name, having great shadows looming upon them from afar, the Lord come to such secretly, and by the silent ministration of His solaces cheer and redeem the heart from despair.

Help us to live more purely and nobly than ever we have lived before. Fill us with love, Thou Christ that spared not the blood of Thine heart. Cleanse us from every taint of

guilt, and make us pure with Thine own holiness. Watch about our bed when we sleep, that our rest may give us newness of life. Be near our door that no enemy may enter, guard Thou our roof, and the storm shall have no power upon it. We commend each other to Thy care. Grant to us each a Sabbath blessing. Take the little children into Thine arms one by one: see how impatient they are to be taken up altogether, and with one pressure to Thine heart Thou shalt more than crown them. The Lord let His word be amongst us this day as music, as a voice from heaven, as a speech that makes the heart glad, that calls the life to higher discipline and nobler purpose. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM C.

*" O worship the King,
All-glorious above;
O gratefully sing
His power and His love;
Our Shield and Defender,
The Ancient of days,
Pavilioned in splendour,
And girded with praise.*

*" O measureless might!
Ineffable love!
While angels delight
To hymn Thee above,
The humbler creation,
Though feeble their lays,
With true adoration
Shall lis'p to Thy praise."*

ALmighty GOD, renew the tokens of Thy favour to us day by day, withhold not Thy tender mercy, and restrain not the outgoing of Thy compassion, for our poor life can live only in Thy pity, and because of Thy love alone may we hope for the days to come. How great is Thy love! Thy love is without end. Thy pity is as a sea that hath no shore.

How wonderfully hast Thou guided us: Thou hast kept us back and sent us forward. Enable us to confide ourselves more trustfully and lovingly to Thy care; help us to put all our affairs into Thine hand: to stand still and see the

salvation of God—to keep back all of our selfish nature that is impatient, narrow, short-sighted, and false-sighted, and in all things may our soul be swallowed up in Thine as the meaner lights are absorbed in the infinite splendour of the sun. We bless Thee for the bread we have eaten, for the home which has sheltered us, for the friends who have relieved our solitude and cheered our despondency, for all the under-helps and ministries of this social life of ours: for unexpected light, for voices of pity, compassion, and sympathy. We thank Thee that we are praying one for another: help us to live in mutual prayer, and to know that the supplication of the saints availeth with the Father.

Let our worship this day be a service of sincerity and of delight: enable us to overcome the memory of our sins by the exercise of Thy pardoning love. We come again to the Cross—we would feel again the sprinkled blood which speaketh better things than that of Abel. Oh may Thy blood touch every life, and out of the efficacy of the Saviour's blood may there come pardon, release, joy. We need Thy blood, O Lamb of God, O Son of God, O Saviour of the world—we need it all, we need it now. Help us, therefore, renouncing our own righteousness, and seeing the infinite worthlessness of our own pleas, to cast ourselves upon the holy sacrifice, the infinite atonement of Christ.

Put within us Thy Holy Spirit, the eternal Life and the perpetual Light, and may we walk in Thy commandments as those whose only gladness is in the keeping of Thy law. Come into our very hearts and rule every thought, even the thoughts which we dare not put into words, then shall our peace be as a river, and our righteousness shall be as the waves of the sea. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: MARK ii. 23-28.]

*"How welcome to the saints, when press'd
With six days' noise and care and toil,
Is the returning day of rest,
Which hides them from the world awhile!"*

*"Now, from the throng withdrawn away,
They seem to breathe a different air:
Composed and softened by the day,
All things another aspect wear."*

*"With joy they hasten to the place
Where they their Saviour oft have met;
And while they feast upon His grace,
Their burdens and their griefs forget."*

*"We thank Thee for Thy day, O Lord;
Here we Thy promised presence seek:
Open Thy hand with blessings stored,
And give us manna for the week."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thy gospel is sweet unto us, for it touches our need, and puts out a healing hand towards our sorrow; lo, it is all music, and the hearing thereof is as the hearing of a great redemption. We are all athirst, our hearts are withered and are afire, crying for water to cool them and to quench their burning. Thou hast called us to the waters of life, the springing waters, that come up out of the rocks and never cease to rise—everlasting wells, springs that cannot be dried up. Behold we have come; satisfy us, every one. Every soul has its own desire, every heart its own uttered or unspoken prayer—according to the poverty which we spread before Thee, do Thou command Thy blessing to rest upon us.

Thou hast been with us all the weary week, here and there and yonder, in all our movements Thou hast moved, about our bed Thou hast drawn the curtain of Thine own protection; behold, not a moment has been without Thy presence and Thy grace. In our sickness we sent for Thee, and if Thou didst abide two days in the same place after our message, lo, it was that Thou mightest surpass Thyself in the mightiness of Thy strength and the tenderness of Thy grace. Thou hast untied for us the knot that threatened to occupy the remainder of our days with its perplexity, and now the line is straight and our way is open—the great hill hath been

smoothed down under our going. This is the Lord's doing, and marvellous beyond all marvels in our sight.

We give Thee thanks for all Thy patience, care, tenderness, sympathy: we live in Thy love, we are afraid of Thy power unless it be administered by Thy mercy—then is Thine almightiness itself a grace, a gentleness, a sympathy. Thou hast been mindful of us with infinite attention; how lavish has been Thy love; how minute Thy care. What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards us—for the removal of mountains, for the bridging over of great rivers, stirred and angry, for the drawing through the wilderness of a path, that we might see and tread? Behold, we have no offering, we are all emptiness, yet would we give Thee ourselves, our remaining life, and ask Thee to accept and sanctify the gift.

Thou hast given us Thy word, a wide open page, written so that the dimmest eyes can see that God is love. Wondrous word, a mother's letter, a father's speech, a Saviour's gospel—may we read it with closer attention; yea, may we live upon it as upon the chosen food of God. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[*Scripture Reading:* PSALM lxvi.]

*"Another six days' work is done;
Another Sabbath is begun;
Return, my soul, enjoy the rest;
Improve the day thy God hath blest.*

*"Come, bless the Lord, whose love assigns
So sweet a rest to wearied minds;
Provides an antepast of heaven,
And gives this day the food of seven."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, if we say Thou hast done all things well, we speak that we do know and testify that whereof we are abundantly convinced. If we look behind us, along the way Thou hast brought our feet—crooked it may have been, and hard and most difficult here and there, wanting in flowers, and in trees, and in water, and in light,

again and again—a severe way, but the way that was right. Or if we behold our path lying through beautiful lands, over easy hills and across blooming plains, and by the still riverside, it was a right road—Thou didst mean so to bring us to our appointed place. We have seen Thy mercy in the daytime, a light above the brightness of the sun; we have seen Thy compassions in the night-season, outshining the eternal stars. Thou hast been with us in our weakness, and in the time of humiliation and pain. Thou hast given us secret and indestructible triumph. Thou hast been with us in our strongest hour, when we were clothed with power as with a garment, and as Thou didst lay it upon our shoulders we knew it to be a gift from God. Thou hast cared for us with more than motherly patience. Thy love has been right tender, even to inexpressibleness of love and pity. Thou always hast had tears in Thine eyes as Thou hast bent over our weakness, and in Thy face there has glowed an ineffable light as Thou hast lifted us out of the prison of our loneliness and gloom. What shall we render to the Lord for all His benefits towards us? Thou hast been mindful of us when we were not mindful of ourselves. When we insisted upon our prayers being answered according to our own speech, Thou hast denied us, if with reluctance yet with righteousness, and Thy withholding an answer according to our desire has been a proof of Thy wisdom as of our ignorance.

We humbly commend one another to Thy protection. Thou knowest what each heart most needs. Every spirit has its own want, every breast its own wound, every life its own shadow. Therefore do we come to Thine altar where alone is there an answer to our pain, a balm for our wound, and a solace for our great sorrow.

But herein do we not accuse ourselves of unworthiness? Yea, verily, so do we, every one. God be merciful unto us sinners! We have no right to arrest Thine attention, for we have forfeited all claim to be heard in Thy court. Our hearts are corrupt, and our hands are full of sin; our head has turned its judgment and understanding to perverse uses; and as for our feet, they have been swift in evil ways. What then is our hope, but in Thine own Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, the Word made flesh, the God-man, dwelling with us and revealing Thy heart and will? He is our priest; He is our propitiation; He was wounded for our transgressions. We therefore remember His blood, His great sacrifice, His infinite work; and because of that memory we are emboldened to pray again. Wash us, and we shall be clean; bring to bear upon our whole life the blood which cleanseth from all sin, and all Thy miracles shall be forgotten in this, the last wonder of Thy sanctifying grace.

Give each of us a new hope; reveal to the most dispirited of us a new encouragement; show the blindest that Thine omnipotence is not exhausted; may loved ones who are far away, on the sea, in the desert, in lands unknown, be caught within Thy benediction, and rejoice with us in a common and immeasurable blessing. O Shepherd of the souls of men, tender One, merciful for ever, go after that which is lost until Thou dost find it; make us glad by seeing the returning prodigal, and in the repentance of sinners may we find the tenderest of our own recollections, the brightest and surest of our own hopes.

The Lord hear us, the Lord enrich us; the Lord's peace, that infinite calm, rest like a Sabbath on the soul. We pray our morning prayer in the Name of Jesus. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM lvii.

*" Lord of the vast creation !
Support of worlds unknown !
Desire of every nation !
Behold us at Thy Throne.*

*" We come for mercy, crying,
Through Thine atoning blood,
And, on Thy grace relying,
We seek each promised good."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, whilst our eyes are lifted up unto the hills from whence cometh our help, may nothing arise between them and the sight they seek, to prevent the glory and completeness of the vision ! Our hearts are turned towards Thee in great expectancy, and, behold, Thou comest with wings outstretched, flying faster than the lightning, that Thou mayest heal, and comfort, and mightily redeem.

We have tested the poverty of time, we have seen the little boundaries which encircle and imprison us, and our souls are filled with infinite discontent because of the meanness of space and time. We would look beyond, we would be drawn by mighty forces that are above, into a higher and purer air ; we would yield ourselves to Thy tender and subtle ministries. We would no longer live in ourselves, and to ourselves, but we would enter into fellowship with Christ, in every pang of His suffering, and in every ecstasy of His joy. Let this our prayer be answered to-day, and we shall rejoice with exceeding great joy, yea, our satisfaction and gladness shall be full.

For all the mercies of another week we bless Thee. Thou hast given us a staff to help us along each difficult road ; Thou hast set lights above us in the time of darkness, and in the hour of solitude Thou hast sent companionships for our souls, yea, all Thine angels have ministered unto us. Thou hast remembered us in our pain, and in the temptation of loneliness, and Thou hast made our desolate places like

Thine own garden. Thy ministry towards us has been one of overflowing love. Thou hast not forgotten the smallest of our needs, but hast watched over us, and fed us with Thine own hand. Evermore fill us with a sense of Thy presence, let a consciousness of Thy nearness destroy all fear of man, let it expel from our heart everything that is of the earth earthy, and fill us with high desire to do Thy will.

We put ourselves confidently and lovingly into Thy hands; deal with us as Thou dost see best; keep us here or send us yonder, as may be right in Thy sight, not in ours. Make our house larger, and multiply our estate greatly, or diminish both, and send us into blankness and poverty, if it be for our soul's health. Grant unto our counsels and devices great success and abundant honour, or drive them all back again into our open windows, that they may be ours without result, if so be our life may thereby be saved. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[*Scripture Reading:* PSALM l. 1-15.]

*"Again returns the day of holy rest
Which, when He made the world, Jehovah blest;
When, like His own, He bade our labours cease,
And all be piety, and all be peace.*

*"Let us devote this consecrated day
To learn His will, and all we learn, obey.
In pure religion's hallowed duties share,
And join in penitence, and join in prayer."*

ALmighty GOD, Thou art the ever-living One, and Thou dost ever give unto the sons of men what is good for their life. No good thing wilt Thou withhold from them that walk uprightly. If our heart be pure, and our spirit be contrite, then shall the kingdom of heaven be within us, and Thy light shall be unto us as a light above the brightness of the sun. We praise Thee for Thy care; we adore Thee as our Sovereign; we love Thee as our Redeemer; we cry mightily unto Thee, as unto the Giver of all that is good. We humbly invoke the presence of Thy Holy Spirit, so that

we may offer unto Thee worship in spirit and in truth. Be with us when we assemble in Thy house. Enlighten Thou the page when we read, and there shall be no darkness. Destroy everything that would injure our hearing of Thy truth and our reception of Thy gospel. Enable us to listen as for eternity. May Thy word be pronounced with clearness, with simplicity, and with great power. Bless Thy servant our minister, and all pastors and teachers everywhere; enrich them with Thy grace. Touch our hearts as Thy word is being uttered, and it shall have free course and be glorified in our spirits.

Most Merciful Father, we come to Thee with humble confession of our sin. May we repent of it heartily, with good intent; so that at the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ we may obtain Thy forgiveness. Hear us when we ask Thee to supply all our need out of the infinite sufficiency of Thy grace, as it is in Jesus Christ our Saviour. We commit ourselves into Thy hand. Do Thou make us steadfast in Thy grace and hopeful in Thy love; and when Thou hast done Thy will in us and by us in this lower scene, may we be lifted up into the higher kingdom, to pursue the same service of love with higher powers.

Unto the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, whom we adore as one God, be the kingdom and the power and the glory, world without end. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[*Scripture Reading: PSALM v.*

BLESSED FATHER, we are gathered in Thy presence to pour out our confession of sin, to seek an assurance of Thy pardoning love, and to give ourselves once more to Thee in a vow of consecration. How wondrous is Thy loving-

kindness, and as for Thy tender mercy who may picture it? Thy kindness is truly loving kindness, so gentle, patient, sympathetic, pitiful, so abounding in tears, so infinite in softness, so infinite in strength. We cast ourselves upon Thy tender mercy: Thy mercy endureth for ever; by no figure can we image it to ourselves; we simply fall into Thine arms, Thou mighty One, and love Thee because we are weak, and frail, and helpless.

We believe that Thou hast great purposes of love concerning us; we cannot read them all, nor can we measure them, nor tell their issue; but our faith is strong that in the end we shall see the light, and sing the new song, and bless Thee even for our sorrows. We have done the things we ought not to have done; if we have not spoken the word of violence, our hearts have strayed away from Thee in love of self and in all the mystery of self-worship. We will not excuse, or defend, or explain; we will put our hand upon our mouth, and our mouth in the dust, and say, We have done the things we ought not to have done. But Thou lookest upon us through the Cross of Christ, through all the love of Christ, through all the mystery of the priesthood of Christ; and in them Thou dost see more than our sin; Thou dost see Thine image, Thou dost hear tones in the broken music which tell of an eternal purpose, and Thou wilt not take pleasure in the death of the sinner. We have heard from the lips of Jesus these sweet words: The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. So our sin may be the beginning of our better selves; in our night of blackness may be created stars that shall outshine it, and turn it into day. Where sin abounds grace doth much more abound. Thy love cannot be vanquished by our transgressions; Thou art still almighty, all-loving, all-

redeeming. We do not know what we say, we cannot tell the meaning of these great words; yet we use them as we use the sun. The sun comes to us in all friendliness of light, but himself we may not touch; so Thy love comes down to us in proffered helpfulness, in tender sympathy, in gracious assurance, in redundancy of promise, though the mystery of Thy love lies back in the secrecy of heaven. It is enough: we want but a pillow for our aching head, a balm for our broken heart, light enough to see the upward way; and then in the after-day, in the upper house, amid the flame that never fades, we shall read all the other things, all the deeper mysteries, all the explanations of our life and its sorrow.

*"That, when earthly toil is o'er,
We may rest for evermore,
May enjoy Thee and adore:
We beseech Thee, hear us."*

*"That we soon may welcome Thee,
And may hear Thee say that we
Where Thou art shall ever be,
We beseech Thee, hear us."*

Amen.

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: ISAIAH lv. 1-7.]

*"Eternal Wisdom has prepared
A soul-reviving feast,
And bids your longing appetites
The rich provision taste."*

*"Ho! ye that pant for living streams,
And pine away and die;
Here you may quench your raging thirst
With springs that never dry."*

*"Great God! the treasures of Thy love
Are everlasting mines;
Deep as our helpless miseries are,
And boundless as our sins."*

*"The happy gates of gospel grace
Stand open night and day;
Lord, we are come to seek supplies,
And drive our wants away."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we come to Thee with our love shaped into an earnest prayer, and with our heart crying after the living God. We come to Thee with our hunger and thirst of soul, for Thou only canst supply our need. Meet with us in Thy house. In our Father's house there is bread enough and to spare. The river of God is full of water. May we eat and drink abundantly of the feast which Thou hast spread with Thine own hand. May

Thy gospel be sweet to us this day : the very word we need ; the one Voice that touches with its sacred music our wonder and our desire. Release us from the tormenting fears and anxieties of this world ; give us rest and peace. Pardon our sin. The blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son cleanseth from all sin. Thou hast made provision for the cleansing of every heart ; we bless Thee for its fulness, and that there is no guilt too great for Thy cleansing.

We think of all for whom we ought to pray, for the sick, for the sons and daughters of pain,—God pity them, and speak some gospel too sacred for our rough lips. Thou knowest us altogether ; the old and the young, the life full of hope, and the life full of despair. Each heart has its own story ; send a gospel to each that none may be left out of Thy benediction. Speak comfortably unto us. Bring us within the sacred enclosure of Thy temple, and give us rest and peace.

Let Thy word dwell in us richly ; let Thy gospel come to us as a singing angel with sweet messages from Thy heart ; and may we listen and give glad welcome to every word from heaven. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM xcix.]

ALmighty GOD, we bless Thee for the Christ, the Son of the living God : He brings us near to Thyself. Seeing Him we see the Father ; laying our hand upon His, we touch Omnipotence ; and looking into the light of His eyes we behold the glory which He had with Thee before the world began. In Jesus Christ Thy Son dwells all the fulness of the Godhead ; may we therefore know Him and study

Him deeply, and lovingly read and consider His words, and enter into the life which He reveals, and which He alone can give. Other gods have had dominion over us, and they have ruled our life as with a rod of iron : they have taken us to empty wells in the time of our fierce thirst, and they have led us far into the stony places and sandy deserts, where our hunger has been as a ravening wolf within us. We have lived to see how mocking were their promises and how enslaved are all their victims. Now we have returned by infinite grace, not to be explained in words, but to be felt as a great passion of liberty and ecstasy and love, to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Therefore, having entered into this great freedom through the Son, who alone can make us free, we would come before Thee with a new song, longer, louder, wider than we ever sang before, because God's mercy grows upon us, His love expands around us like an undiscovered and ever-rolling sea ; and as for His compassion, doth it not rain upon us tears of perpetual pity ; and because Thy loving-kindness riseth before the sun and lingereth after the setting of that weary light, is our life continued unto us and is our hope undisturbed enjoyment.

We have been down in the valleys of the week where the darkness is, and the cold wind blows ; where every hope is a disappointment, and where every pleasure stings. And now we have come to Thee out of the difficult places, and would see the Son of man. Go up with us, we pray Thee, to Thy courts, and there let us see visions that will make all other beauty pale and die. Let us look upon distances and amplitudes and dominions, which will set in our hearts a grievous discontent with all the narrowness of time and all the disappointments of earth, and create within us a yearning, for the better land and the sweeter rest and the nobler duty

and the diviner service. Thus shall we be led on and lifted up by strange powers, into richer estate, and shall be empowered with all the liberties and dignities of our inheritance in Christ Jesus.

*"O God of families, impart
To each an understanding heart;
The knowledge of Thy will bestow,
And grace to practise what we know.*

*"And when on earth we cease to be,
As now, a happy family;
To us, O God, may it be given
To be a family in heaven."*

Amen.

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: ISAIAH lxi.

*"Jesus, Thy robe of righteousness
My beauty is, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in this arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.*

*"This spotless robe the same appears,
When ruined nature sinks in years;
No age can change its lovely hue;
Its glory is for ever new."*

BLESSED LORD, we bring to Thee the robe of the week, fouled and torn, that Thou mayest again array us in the white linen of the saints. We have done the things we ought not to have done, we have left undone the things we ought to have done, and we come without excuse or defence, for Thou hast given us light enough to see all the way, and help enough to sustain us against every assault, yet have we utterly failed, and there is no white day in our whole life without scar or blot upon its beauty. God be merciful unto us sinners, and show us the Cross, the sacred Cross, the redeeming, healing Cross, and in the sight of that vision our sin shall be all forgotten.

We bless Thee for all Thy tender care, Thy long-continued patience; Thou dost watch over each of us as an only child. Behold there is no measure to the Lord's mercy, and His compassions fail not. We bless Thee for Thy great Book, so full of music, and truth, and beauty; touching us at every point of our life, speaking to us the one

word we most need, comforting us with infinite solaces, opening the prospect beyond the horizon of time, and enabling us to see into the rest and the joyous service of heaven. Give Thy word mighty wings to-day, that it may fly farther than ever: make the voices of Thy servants sweeter than trumpets of silver, and louder than shocks of thunder, and let Thy word be heard everywhere, awakening and gladdening the hearts of men.

We humbly implore Thee to guide us during our life. It is a life that is reckoned in days; behold it is in the power of man to tell us how many breaths there are in our seventy years, yet we know not that we may ever draw another breath. Thou didst make us and not we ourselves; we are Thine, we are not our own, therefore would we resign to Thee that which never belonged to us, and our prayer would sum itself up in the one desire, Not our will, but Thine, be done. Nourish and comfort Thy people as children who wait upon Thy table and have no other feast to eat. Dry the tear that no human hand can reach, turn into glad hymn and psalm the groaning and the crying that we cannot assuage, and, this day, may there be joy in Zion, such as never was known before.

The Lord's blessing be round about the whole globe like a living light; omit none from Thy benediction; let the rudest, poorest, vilest, feel that the heavens are filled with the Father, and that the earth is His footstool, then shall men's hearts be glad with the very joy of Thine own heart, and all life shall become as the music of the blest. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading : PSALM lxxxiv.

*“ Lord, have mercy when we pray
Strength to seek a better way;
When our wakening thoughts begin
First to loathe our cherished sin;
When our weary spirits fail,
And our aching brows are pale;
When our tears bedew Thy word,
Then, O then, have mercy, Lord !*

*“ Lord, have mercy when we know
First how vain this world below !
When our darker thoughts oppress,
Doubts perplex and fears distress;
When the earliest gleam is given
Of Thy bright but distant heaven;
Then Thy fostering grace afford,
Then, O then, have mercy, Lord !”*

WE bless Thee that our whole life is in Thy care, O Nurse of creation, Father and Mother of us all. There is not a word in our mouth, nor is there a thought in our heart, that is not known altogether unto Him who is our loving One and mighty Redeemer. This is the gladness of life. That Thou should'st know us altogether would be our supreme joy but for the dark places in the heart, but for the tortuous windings of the affections and the will, but for all the ruins and remains of an evil kingdom only partially overthrown. Lord, help us to overcome, give us the all-triumphant grace, bless us with the all-sufficient wisdom and the all-illuminating truth, put Thy sword into our right hand, and upon our breast do Thou lay Thy shield, yea, do Thou cover us with all defences, that there may be no hour of failure and apostasy in our short life, which is already ruined by sin and promised redemption by the Saviour.

We mourn our sin incessantly, for never did it bring pleasure to the heart. It has brought deceit and lying promises, which it never redeemed ; it has exhilarated us for a moment that it might crush us for ever. O hateful sin, deadly sin, beseeching us, importuning us as if for our good, promising us liberty and mocking our captivity. We hate it as well as mourn it, our hearts rise up in infinite grief and sharp pain and deadly hate, and abhor the sins which they

have done. But this leaves the sin untouched, it is still there—the shadow that chills us, the tyrant that promises to have its own revenge—what then is our hope? It is in Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, whose most precious blood cleanseth from all sin. Wash us and we shall be clean—wash us our head, our heart, our hands, our feet, wholly, that we may be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and this we shall take as a pledge that Thou wilt do all the rest. Help us to stand fast in this holy and ennobling faith, recall it to our minds when we are afraid of the details of life: when for a moment great difficulties intervene between us and the grandest of Thy promises, teach us that we are still on the road, we shall mount the hill and be brought again into the full view of the delights of God.

Thou knowest the sorrow of each heart, and the pain of each life is known in heaven. Command Thy grace and blessing to rest upon us accordingly. Our great griefs are not the greatest griefs of all, but these other griefs, these great sorrows, these troubles that stand back in the shadow, and affright us, which no other eye but Thine own can see, from these, good Lord, deliver us—or sanctify them to us that we may be the better for them, stronger than ever, the more tuneful in our obedience to Thy purpose, the more noble in our sacrifices in Thy service. The Lord look on and bless us each and all; the grey-haired and the young, the busy and those that are at leisure. Oh that we all might realise Thy presence, and know this to be the very gate of heaven. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[*Scripture Reading* : ISAIAH lxiii. 1-16.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, give us release from the anxieties and torments of a worldly life ; lift us above the cares and distresses incident to an earthly pilgrimage, and bring us into Thine inner chamber, where our hearts shall see the radiance of Thy face, and our life shall be lifted up into a new and immortal hope. Thou hast been with us in the valley, and even in the darkness we have seen where the flowers were, and our hands have been filled with their beauty. Thou hast caused us to pass over stony places, yet, even in the rock, hast Thou found a river of water, so that we have not died in the wilderness by reason of thirst. Where the water has been bitter Thou hast given us a plant to heal its bitterness, and in the darkness Thou hast turned upon us eyes brighter than the morning. Because of Thy great goodness we are here with hearts lifted heavenward, and with a great desire going out after Thyself, that our souls may be completed in perfection, and soothed with peace.

Help us to live the rest of our time before Thee with all reverence, love, and usefulness. Enable us to remember the brevity of the day, the sudden coming of the night, and to be obedient, with all diligence and ardour, while we can. Wherein Thou hast prospered us in basket and in store, let Thy goodness lead us to repentance ; let all proofs of Thy outward care for our life make us remember how much Thou hast done for our redemption, so that, little by little, we may grope our way from that which is outward and perishable, to that which is internal and indestructible.

We commend all whom we love to Thy gentle care. Carry the sick ones in Thy great arms, press the little ones

Thine infinite heart, kiss the tears of sorrow from the burning cheek, and when the storm has spent itself, give a time of quiet sunshine. Help every man who wishes to do better to realise this solemn hope, and to every man who would lift himself up by Thy grace and strength so as to catch the full shining of Thy light, give grace, strength, comfort, and renewal of confidence every day. If any heart be set upon evil, and any hand be trying to find what mischief it can work, the Lord confound the counsel of those who are wrong, and overturn the purpose of those who know not and fear not Thy Name.

The Lord pardon our sins, and repeat His miracle of grace in our life every day. We say this in the Name of Jesus, our Priest, our Intercessor, the Daysman between Thyself and us. Thou hearest Him always; Thy delight is to look upon His face, and to consider what He has done. Behold our Shield, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed, and from the inner and hidden sanctuary send us forgiveness, and bless us with all spiritual help.

The Lord give cheerfulness of heart to those who have known long sorrow; the Lord show one little rift in the dark cloud, through which the morning may be seen—yea, the Lord be tender with His own comfortableness to those who have been long strangers to joy and peace.

Good Lord, hear us: let Thy pity be greater than our sin: let the Cross of Jesus Christ rise infinitely beyond the gloom of our distress, and give us assurance of pardon, purity, and heaven.

*"My lips, with shame, my sins confess
Against Thy law, against Thy grace:
Lord, should Thy judgment grow severe,
I am condemned, but Thou art clear."*

*"Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,
Whose hope, still hovering round Thy word,
Would light on some sweet promise there,
Some sure support against despair."*

Amen.

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM cxix. 9-24.]

*"Father of all, in whom alone
We live and move and breathe,
One bright, celestial ray dart down,
And cheer Thy sons beneath.*

*"While in Thy word we search for Thee,—
We search with trembling awe—
Open our eyes, and let us see
The wonders of Thy law."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, open our eyes that we may see wondrous things out of Thy law. Give us the understanding heart, that nothing may pass by us without being considered as sent of God. Give us the vision that can see at night as well as at day; grant unto us the indwelling of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may know the things that are occurring, and may connect them with Thy throne and sceptre and Fatherly purpose; then shall we be no longer tossed and driven to and fro, and made the sport of every rising wind; we shall be quiet and calm; we shall know the peace of God, and shall, in our degree, be calm as our Father Himself is calm. Show us how little our wrath can do, how puny is our arm, how utterly useless our little strength: may we answer with instant and loving obedience the voice that says, Be still, and know that I am God. Show us the power of waiting, the power of trust in the living God; may we be enabled to say, God is our refuge and strength, therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

Come near unto us, we pray Thee, and bless us, according to our need. We know our frailty, we know the measure of our strength how little it is: sanctify our infirmities, our disappointments, our fruitless endeavours, and teach us that all things work together for good to them that love God. May we love God in Jesus Christ His Son, more and more, that so amongst the all things that are working, we may reckon even sin and death, pain and loss, the grim night, and the cold wind, and the bitter lot. The Lord grant unto us

life more and more ; the Lord give unto us light upon light, as many days rolled into one ; and when the sun is shining in all his glory may his little spark be put out by a light above the brightness of the noonday. Be with all our loved ones everywhere ; with those who are watching their dead, and wondering what it all means : be with those who for the first time have shed real tears, waters that drown the heart, and shut out the light : and be with those who are tossed about and perplexed, and whose little strength cries out in pain. Spare them Thy derision, and grant that they may hear some tone of music that will call them to thoughtfulness, and from thoughtfulness to higher reverence, and from higher reverence to humblest prayer. Steady our souls ; may our hearts fix their wistful gaze upon the Cross of Christ, that sign of love, that proof of righteousness, that mystery of pity. May our nights qualify us for our days ; may our days be times of sacred industry. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: ISAIAH XXXV.

*" The festal morn, my God, is come,
That calls me to Thy hallowed dome,
Thy presence to adore ;
My feet the summons shall attend,
With willing steps Thy courts ascend,
And tread the sacred floor.*

*" What joy while thus I view the day
That warns my thirsting soul away !
What transports fill my breast !
For lo ! my great Redeemer's power
Unfolds the everlasting door,
And leads me to His rest."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we come with the week's hymn of love ; for all the six days gone Thou hast been with us—the brightness of our morning, the star of our night. Thou hast protected our roof, and our doors, and our windows ; Thou hast made our bed, and kindled our fire, and spread our table ; and Thy rod is an unbroken staff in our hand. Behold us, then, grateful ; full of high desire to

bless and praise Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Name. Let our weakness become strength ; may our very sin endear Thee to us by reason of our contrition and repentance. We kneel before Thee with one sacred purpose in our hearts, and humbly offer Thee our ardent love. Surely when Thou passest through the heavens, and lookest down upon the earth, Thou wilt not forget the altars where Thy children pray. Send a special blessing upon all who are remembering Thee, and give us this day a baptism, gentle as dew, ardent as fire, bright as light, and let us henceforward be Thine by a deeper consecration. The Lord be kind unto all for whom we ought to pray. To the old and weary give rest, to the sick send messages of consolation, to the poor grant a vision of Thine unsearchable riches.

We bless Thee for all Thy Bible of love, wide as the heavens, and green as the earth in summer-time. We bless Thee for the inner revelation of Thy Spirit—that sacred ministry which is beyond all words and too holy for song. We bless Thee for the house of prayer, the sanctuary of defence, the place of silence and of song, the house of inspiration, the place where prayer is wont to be made, the outer court of Thy great temple above. From this day forth may we all be Thine, may the Cross be the object of our love, and the kingdom of Christ the supreme hope of our life. Forgetting the things that are behind, may we press towards the things that are before—better things, higher and altogether greater—and, by a mighty and daily constraint of the heart, may we be drawn onward to the things which are full of God, and therefore, full of heaven. Let Thine Amen be greater than our prayer, yea, let Thine answer overflow our petition as the waters cover the channels of the sea.
Amen.

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: 1 PETER i. 13-25.]

*"How short and hasty is our life!
How vast our soul's affairs!
Yet senseless mortals vainly strive
To lavish out their years."*

*"Draw us, O God, with sovereign grace,
And lift our thoughts on high,
That we may end this mortal race,
And see salvation nigh."*

ETERNAL ONE, the days flee away ere we can count them one by one. They cease to be days; they are like flashes in the darkness, and are gone instantly. Help us to know the measure of our life, how little it is, a child's tiny span, and to realise that our time is as a flying shuttle,—a post hastening on its way, a shadow that continueth not. We pray Thee to take care of us during our remaining days. Hold Thou us up, and we shall be safe; forsake us not for one instant, for the serpent is watchful, and the enemy mighty. Give us the right answer to every temptation: give us the right view of every trial; help us so to number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom; and give us that holy trust in Thy Name and grace which no power can shake. May our hearts wait upon God steadfastly; and with all the constancy of inviolable love may we ever look unto God from whom is all our expectation.

The Lord anoint us afresh to His work; the Lord pity our littlenesses, and reckon them not as sins against us; the Lord have mercy upon us according to the fulness of His own grace, and the infinite work of our one and only Priest and Saviour. We entreat Thee to hear us when we bless Thee for all Thy loving care. Thou hast kept the roof over our head, and the fire has not gone out in our home. Behold Thou hast kept the winter outside, and on the hearthstone is the flower of summer. Our table Thou dost spread with a liberal hand, Thou dost make our bed and soften our pillow, and send sweet sleep to give us new strength. Our

friends are with us, touching us with their sympathy, blessing us with the comfort of high fellowship, and giving gladness to the heart. Thou hast spared unto us our reason, and granted us the power of enjoyment; we are bound to one another by the bonds of love, yet no fetter has destroyed our freedom. What then shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards us?

Beyond all this, Thou hast made our hearts rich with Thy grace; Thou hast set a bright hope before our eyes; Thou hast put into our souls the comfort of Thy Son; Thou hast given us a Saviour—Name high above all others, sweet beyond all the names we know. May He be unto us Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, all and in all, what we need, what we cannot live without, assurance upon assurance, as grace upon grace, until our confidence becomes a high triumph. We bless Thee for Thy written word, placed before us in our mother tongue: we thank Thee for the ability to read it, each one for himself. As we read do Thou explain; then shall Thy word be written upon the inner page of our loving hearts.

Hear us in these our uttered prayers, and as for the desires we may not and cannot speak, read them every one, as they lie unspoken in the heart. Wherein they point towards truth and better life, towards penitence and nobler purpose, Thou wilt give them infinite answers of satisfaction and peace. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: PSALM lxxxix. 1-18.]

*"I could not do without Thee,
O Saviour of the lost,
Whose precious blood redeem'd me
At such tremendous cost;
Thy righteousness, Thy pardon,
Thy precious blood must be
My only hope and comfort,
My glory and my plea.*

*"I could not do without Thee,
I cannot stand alone,
I have no strength or goodness,
No wisdom of my own;
But Thou, beloved Saviour,
Art all in all to me,
And weakness will be power
If leaning hard on Thee."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we cannot live without Thee, nor endure the heat and burden of the day without the shelter of Thy love. There is no arm so strong as Thine, there is no wisdom so full of light as is the omniscience of God. Thy grace is deeper than the sea, and Thy love is higher than the sun. Thus doth rest come into our hearts, and peace alight upon our spirits as a dove from heaven.

Thou knowest the need of every heart, the pain of the wounded spirit, the joy of the delivered soul, the song of those who have great hope, and the purpose of those whose to-morrow is bright with gladness. Come to us according to the want, or pain, or joy, of each heart. When our purpose is evil, turn our counsel upside down; and when our aim is good, help us to make it sure. Break the arm that is lifted against light, truth, beauty, holiness, and all heavenliness of love and thought. The Lord bind us one and all with new oaths of loyalty to love and serve the Cross; and when we are tempted to put baser devices on our banner may we know the voice to be the voice of the enemy.

The Lord help us when we need help most. The angel of the Lord be near us when the enemy would come in as a flood. May the delivering Spirit redeem us from despair, and set our tried souls high on the everlasting hills where

they will catch all the brightness of the hope that is in God. Pity us when we are proud of ourselves ; fight not against us when we give way before Thee and fall down in penitence and expectation, but let the light of Thy countenance fall upon us—a deliverance and a hope.

We would thank Thee for all Thy lovingkindness and tender mercy. Thou dost lead us by ways that we know not, and unexpected answers dost Thou give to our trouble and our want. We look back to behold a long line of light. That line is Thy love, Thy care, Thy patience; and as we look forward we behold a long line of golden promise and tender assurance, so that we have no fear clouding and darkening our hearts. This is the Lord's doing, this is the gift of heaven, this is the revelation of God's love to our life, though it be dark with sin, and vexed with many cares. What time we are afraid we put our trust in God ; when the sky is black we know that the sun is still there, and that no force but Thine can shake that source of light. Help us to know that the troubles of this life are for a moment, but as their season is short, so their visitation is often sharp. May we put our trust in Thy love, and righteousness, and tender care, and be quiet, though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

The Lord give strength unto all those whose desire it is to make the world gladder day by day. The Lord give rest unto the weary, hope to the sad, and a new beginning to those who have spoiled all the past. Heal us wherein we are sick ; give us light wherein the darkness is too thick to be penetrated by our own vision, and lead us evermore, one step at a time, not where we want to go, but where it is best for us to be. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[*Scripture Reading*: PSALM xcii.]

MOST GRACIOUS GOD, we approach Thee in the Name of Jesus Christ Thy Son. In His Name we call upon Thee. Thou dost charge us to meet Thee, and to meet Thee is to be in heaven. Thou dost appoint the place of communion—in the unhewn rock, or by the unsheltered Cross, in the great wide wilderness, in the solemn temple. If Thou dost appoint the place, Thou wilt surely be there, and if Thou dost tell the time, Thou wilt not be behind. Lo, this have we proved in the days that are gone, and this is our strength this morning, and this our hopeful anticipation of the unknown time. We come with our several praises, each heart with its own hymn, each mouth with its own acclaim; for have we not all received good at Thine hand from the oldest to the youngest? And as Thy grace so is the light of the sun, an impartial benediction. We bless Thee for all Thy mercies, for providential care by night and by day. Thou hast ever been mindful of us; Thou hast made our couch; Thou hast kindled our fire, Thou hast found bread for us morning, noon, and night, and all the kindness of tender friendship Thou hast caused to pass before us. Shall we not, therefore, take the cup of praise and call upon the Name of the Lord? Thy Spirit has comforted us with infinite solace, a light from heaven has fallen upon the mysteries of time, and we have been enabled to pray when not a star was to be seen. We would now give ourselves to Thee, because Thou didst first give Thyself to us, holy, acceptable unto our Father Lord.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we bless Thee for Thine earthly courts; the place of rest, where the light shineth upon our hearts, where the voice of hope appeals to our ear, where all the

treasured grace of Thy Son is available for our hearts' necessity. We have been in bare places, and our feet are weary with stony paths. Lead us into Thy house; make it a great paradise; send us into green pastures and by the still waters. But for yesterday we should not have known the gladness of this morning: we leave the memory of the burdens and the cares, the anxieties and the disappointments, the mortifications of the past—now we have entered into liberty and rest and joy. We stand upon a great height, from which we can look out upon the mountains of Thy grace, and upon the plains to which Thou dost call us in the coming time. One sight of paradise makes the earth endurable, one glimpse of the true light makes us hopeful, fills us with a strange gladness, yea, even with rapture and ecstasy, and with the very spirit of triumph.

*"My heart shall triumph in my Lord,
And bless His works, and bless His word;
Thy works of grace, how bright they shine!
How deep Thy counsels! how divine!"*

*"But I shall share a glorious part,
When grace has well refined my heart,
And fresh supplies of joy are shed,
Like holy oil to cheer my head."*

*"Sin, my worst enemy before,
Shall vex mine eyes and ears no more;
Mine inward foes shall all be slain,
Nor Satan break my peace again."*

*"Then shall I see and hear and know
All I desired or wished below;
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy."*

Amen.

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: MARK xvi.]

*"Hail, morning known among the blest!
Morning of hope and joy and love;
Of heavenly peace and holy rest;
Pledge of the endless rest above."*

*"Blest be the Father of our Lord,
Who from the dead hath brought His Son:
Hope to the lost was then restored,
And everlasting glory won."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, if Thou wilt visit us in Thy light there shall be no night here, neither shall there be shadow of grief or care; a great, broad splendour shall fill the outline of our life, and throw itself upon all the solemn and unknown future. Say unto us, Let there be light, and

there shall be light, yea, a light above the brightness of the sun, before which nothing that is dark can abide. We would see light in Thy light ; we would rejoice in the heavens of God even whilst we are upon His earth.

Thou hast appointed this day as a time of elevation : it is a mountain day : we climb the high hill reaching above the clouds this morning, and from its height we see the very inmost pinnacles of the Zion of God. Keep every one of us from debasing the day ; give us a true conception of its meaning ; fire our imagination with all the possibilities which arise out of its appointment. It is creation-day, yea, it is resurrection-day, for did not the Creator Himself rise again from the dead upon it ? We praise Him who is the Risen One ; we stay but a moment at His grave, there to hear the angel tell us that He is not in the tomb, but is risen. We bless Thee for this angelic gospel, but we long to hear the higher music, the tenderer strain, even the gracious words which proceed out of the mouth of Christ Himself. May we receive a new life and a new and larger charter ; and in His spoken word may we hear the beating of the heart of God, and as He looks upon us may our tears ascend into Thy sky and be flushed with Thy light, and spread over us like a new bow of promise.

We bless Thee for all Thy love, Thy gentle care and hope : Thou dost find a habitation for us in the wilderness, Thou dost watch our door when we shut it, Thou dost send the living breeze into our house when we throw open the window, Thou makest our bed in our affliction with a hand gentler than the hand of human love. We have no worthy hymn, nor psalm sweet enough, to celebrate Thy tender presence. Abide with us ; fill up our whole being ; leave

no unvisited and unblest section of our life ; may the whole of it receive the light of Heaven and rejoice in an eternal day. Poor, dejected and lost—weak, inconstant and fickle—now joyful, now sad—weary because of the long road and the hot day and the heavy burden—stained with sin, stained with the tears of unreasoning and often irreligious grief—we now come before Thee, to say, God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, and make us glad with the joy of the angels. We bless Thee for the privileges of Thy house. The Lord meet us there. Bless Thy servant, our pastor ; we pray Thee pour upon him an especial blessing. May the Spirit of the living God be in our midst to show unto us the things of Christ, and make us see them in all their vivid beauties. Take away from us everything that would hinder a due hearing and joyful reception of Thy gospel ; banish all tormenting reflections, give us release from the importunate temper, give us to feel the sacredness of the service and the grandeur of the opportunity. We bow before Thy Cross, O Christ ; may Thy blood flow into our life and bear its infinite sin away. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading : PROVERBS viii. 1–17.]

*" Blest day of God, most calm, most bright,
The first and best of days ;
The labourer's rest, the saint's delight,
A day of mirth and praise.*

*" My Saviour's face did make thee shine,
His rising did thee raise ;
This made thee heavenly and Divine
Beyond the common days.*

*" The first fruits do a blessing prove
To all the sheaves behind ;
And they that do a Sabbath love,
A happy week shall find.*

*" This day must I for God appear,
For, Lord, the day is Thine ;
O let me spend it in Thy fear !
Then shall the day be mine."*

ALMMIGHTY GOD, we thank Thee for every word of wisdom which we can hide in our heart. May the word of Christ dwell in us richly, an answer to every

temptation, the star of every night, the promise of the life beyond, a great miracle of companionship and instruction. May we not treasure Thy words in our intellect only, but hide them in our heart of hearts, that we may not sin against Thee. Thou hast made a word for every moment of our life; Thou dost begin the day with Thy promises, Thou dost conclude the time of labour with Thy benediction. All the day long there is a word to meet the deep necessity: these are the gifts of God, these are the miracles of grace.

We rejoice in the promise that no man shall pluck the redeemed out of the Father's hand. This is the word of Thy Son, Son of God, Son of man, Saviour of the world. He loved us unto the death; if Thou didst not make these promises He would have told us so; He would not tempt us with disappointment; no false hope would He raise in the poor broken heart of the world. Because of His Cross we believe Him; because of His Cross we trust Him: He who accepted the Cross has told us the truth of God. Help us to remember it, to cherish it, use it, lean upon it, and prove to all the world that we have meat to eat which has been given to us from eternity. As for our sins, how great they are; who can number them? Who can say where they begin, how they continue, and what is the sum of them? We will not dwell upon the darkness of sin, we will look to the light of the Cross, we will say to our souls in all their deepest gloom, The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Having realised this miracle, and experienced this joy, we will say, Unto Him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[*Scripture Reading*: MALACHI iii.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we come to Thee to renew our vows of loyalty to Thy Son Jesus Christ, our only and infinitely sufficient Saviour and Priest. We rejoice that His Name is to continue for ever and ever, multiplying His triumphs daily, and constantly bringing down all powers that exalt themselves against the throne of Thy righteousness. We have heard of Jesus, and truly His Name is music in our ears: it speaks to our unspeakable remorse, it falls healingly as from heaven upon the agonies of our soul. We will therefore love it and prize it and mightily defend it, and bring, by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, our whole life under its ministry and inspiration. Other gods have had dominion over us—we would renounce them all. We would turn aside from all evil tempers, from all unwise ways, from all the deceits of the world and the flesh, and setting our faces towards the rising of the sun, we would not change our attitude until, by the help of Thy Spirit, the eternal and all-sufficient ministry of the Holy Ghost, we enter into the city where no enemy can find us for ever.

Regard our loved ones everywhere. We pray for those in peril on the sea: we desire Thy healing grace and comfort for those who are in the chamber of affliction; in the place of solitude may there be the companionship of angels, and down by the dark troubled river's edge may there be One waiting like unto the Son of man, who shall smite the dark waters and cause Thy trembling ones to pass through as on dry land.

Help us to live the remainder of our days in constancy to all righteousness and truth, in devotedness to every call of charity. Inspire us, we humbly pray Thee, that out of our

belief of Thy truth, there may come holy, lofty, noble and beneficent character, miracles of sacrifice; that men taking knowledge of us may know that we have been with none other than the Son of God.

Mighty one, destroy our weakness, and for it put within us Thy great power; chase away our ignorance, and make us rich with Thy heavenly wisdom; put utterly to flight the fear that often threatens to become despondency, and give us the joy of the Holy Ghost, the hope of Thy beloved ones, and the confidence of those who see their Father without a cloud. Help us to enter Thy courts with praise. Fill Thy servant our pastor with the Holy Ghost; through him do Thou give unto us messages from heaven. May Thy word be gracious unto us to-day—a gospel that we shall know because of the answer to our longing and needy hearts, and above all things give us assurance of pardon, consciousness of the forgiveness of our sins, that from this day forth we may be free men in Thy city, knowing what it is to enjoy the liberty of Thy love, and the hope and confidence of Thine indwelling grace.

*“Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but Thee;
Yet possessing
Every blessing,
If our God our Father be.*

*“Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
All our weakness Thou dost know;
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe;
Lone and dreary,
Faint and weary,
Through the desert Thou didst go.*

*“Spirit of our God, descending,
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
Love with every passion blending,
Pleasure that can never cloy:
Thus provided,
Pardoned, guided,
Nothing can our peace destroy.”*

Amen.

SUNDAY.]

[*Scripture Reading* : PSALM xxvii.]

*"The Lord of glory is my light,
And my salvation too;
God is my strength, nor will I fear
What all my foes can do.*

*"One privilege my heart desires;
O grant me an abode
Among the churches of Thy saints,
The temples of my God.*

*"There shall I offer my requests,
And see Thy beauty still;
Shall hear Thy messages of love,
And there inquire Thy will.*

*"When troubles rise and storms appear,
There may His children hide:
God has a strong pavilion, where
He makes my soul abide."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, teach us that Thy way is often hidden, but always perfect, and that Thy meaning is not disclosed here and now in all its fulness, but that by-and-by we shall see that which cannot now be discerned. Forbid that we should cease to pray; may we abate nothing of energy, sacrifice, toil, obedience; though weak, may we still be pursuing; may our eyes at least be set in the right direction, though our feet are unable to run with swiftness the upward way. We bless Thee for the insight into providence with which Thou hast blessed us. We begin to see somewhat of the shape of things; we see that the Lord reigneth, that all things are under His control. The Lord is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. In our trouble may we flee unto Thee with eager haste, and trust nothing to ourselves, and have no communion with ourselves as to the ways and means of meeting the enemy, but at once, and with the full consent of the heart, may we look unto the hills whence cometh our help, and patiently wait for the Lord.

For all Thy mercies, comforts, hopes, encouragements, benedictions, we bless Thee with united heart and voice. We commend one another to Thy tender care; lift the burden where it is too heavy; dry the tears where they do not enlarge the vision but blind it; open for us ways upon

roads that are at present inaccessible; give us a humble, heartfelt trust in our Father's goodness; and may we stand upon that as upon a rock that cannot be shaken. Nurse our sick ones, lift them awhile from the hot bed, and give them rest within Thine arms; lay them down again with Thine own gentleness, and give them sleep. The Lord grant unto us a sense of sin forgiven, sin pardoned through Jesus Christ our Lord, God the Son, who loved us and gave Himself for us, and who by giving life for life redeemed the world. Guide us in all things. Give us this day new visions of truth, profound realisations of Thy presence and companionship, the joy of spiritual communion. May we have open access to the Father, through Jesus Christ His Son, and having such access may we come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN XV. 1-17.]

*"Jesus, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.*

*"O hope of every contrite heart!
O joy of all the meek!
To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek.*

*"But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show:
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but His loved ones know.*

*"Jesus, my only joy be Thou,
As Thou my prize wilt be:
Jesus, be Thou my glory now,
And through eternity."*

ALmighty GOD, we pray Thee to reveal the Saviour to our wondering love, bring Him into our hearts as our one King, spoil all meaner principedoms, and reign over us, Thou wounded Christ, Thou Son of God. We rejoice that our life is a new life since we saw Jesus; it is no longer scattered and incoherent; it hath shape and meaning and

purpose. Help us to follow on to know the Lord, lest we be wearied by temporary difficulties, by pettiness and vexation which is but for a moment. Help us to lay hold of things eternal, that we may be enabled to triumph over things temporal. When the cloud is dark, when the road is long and wearisome, when the night seems to linger long as if in mockery of our weariness and aggravation of our pain, then come to us, Thou Man walking upon the sea, Thou who dost open the grave's mouth, and in whose presence the chamber of death becomes a temple of resurrection. O that the Lord of Hosts, clothed with might, to whom belong the shields of the earth and the spears of heaven, might be with us evermore, a continual defence, a mighty and ineffable presence. Thy care for us outruns our mother's love—Thy patience doth not come speedily to an end. We live in Thy pity—it is in Thy compassion that we continue our existence, and not in Thy righteousness or Thy judgment. Behold how frail we are: we know the right yet do the wrong—we can point to the road that leads upward and ends in the sky, whilst we are running the other way and seeking the chambers of destruction. If men ask us which is the tree of life, we can point to it, whilst we ourselves are eating the fruit of death. Oh that we might have a higher sense, a better discretion, a truer feeling—that we might turn our knowledge into wisdom and walk evermore in the fear of the Lord.

The Lord hear us in this our prayer. It will prevail in the Name of our Priest; we would sprinkle it with His blood, we would purify it with His sacrifice. Let Thine answer come, not according to the narrowness of our words, but according to all our need and pain. Give us plenty of work by day; sweet, sound, deep sleep at night. When the days and the nights have all fled, welcome us into the broad morning that never deepens into eventide. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: I CORINTHIANS XV. 1-22.]

*"Blest morning, whose young dawning rays
Beheld our rising God,
That saw Him triumph o'er the dust,
And leave His dark abode.*

*"In the cold prison of a tomb
The dead Redeemer lay,
Till the revolving skies had brought
The third, the appointed day.*

*"To Thy great Name, Almighty Lord,
These sacred hours we pay;
And loud hosannas shall proclaim
The triumph of the day.*

*"Salvation and immortal praise
To our victorious King;
Let heaven and earth and rocks and seas,
With glad hosannas ring."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou hast in Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light. We are no longer children of the dust; we are sons of the day; we walk in the light; we have hope in God's eternity; we know that because Christ lives we shall live also. This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. May we have this knowledge in our hearts, hiding it there for our secret comfort, living upon it as upon bread sent down from heaven. We rejoice that we are crucified with Christ; nevertheless we live; yet not we, but Christ liveth in us, and the life which we now live in the flesh we live by faith on the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us. All things are changed in Christ: the whole creation beams with a new glory when read through the ministry and mediation of Thy Son. His glory filleth the whole sky, and lighteth upon the simplest and meanest thing with all the beauty of a blessing. We thank Thee that we now know what Christ is: He is Thy Son; He is the revealer of the Father; He is the express image of Thy person: may we hide His words in our hearts, may we truly sustain our souls upon them; then shall our life without be a life of strength, and tenderness, and beauty, strong to help the weak, and full of sympathy towards those who are bowed down and are without help. May we glorify the Spirit of Christ by our own benevolence. As Jesus Christ went about doing good,

so may we place our feet in His footprints, and pursue the same journey of beneficence, doing good with both hands, and evermore praying the blessing of heaven to rest upon the earth. We would live and move and have our being in God ; we would be strong in the strength of Christ and of His grace ; then death shall have no more dominion over us. Father of our spirits, comfort us ; send into our hearts sweet gospel messages of hope, and may they sing to us the night long until the shadows flee away because heaven's morning has come. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: JOHN xiv. 1-14.

*" Father, behold, with gracious eyes,
Those who through Christ draw near
To pay their living sacrifice,
And worship in Thy fear.*

*" Well-pleased in Him, Thyself declare ;
Thy pardoning love reveal ;
The peaceful answer of our prayer,
To every conscience seal.*

*" On each, on all, some gift bestow,
Some blessing now impart ;
The seed of life eternal sow
In every waiting heart.*

*" O Father, glorify Thy Son,
And grant what we require :
For Jesus' sake, the gift send down,
And answer us by fire."*

ALmighty GOD, give us understanding of the words of Jesus Christ Thy Son, lest they be lost upon us. We cannot hear the music of His speech, we do but hear the words which He uttered. Would that we could hear their meaning, receive it, apply it, and live under the power of its inspiration. Deep is the meaning of Christ, infinite are the suggestions of His wisdom, and we, poor creatures of yesterday, toil after Him with infinite difficulty ; still, if we be pursuing in the right direction He will encourage us, and will even come to meet us, will leave all heaven and eternity behind Him that He may help the children of earth and time. This well becometh His Name, for it is Jesus : He was called Jesus because He was to save men from their

sins. May He save us every one : may each soul know that Jesus Christ died for him : thus may there be great joy in our midst, yea, a great overflow of gladness. We desire oftentimes to be led into the inner sanctuary, the holy of holies, that there we may hear things that cannot elsewhere be heard. Give us sometimes to feel the solemnity of silence, the glory of patience, the all but divinity of waiting : then shall our strength be renewed, and we shall come up out of silence and patient waiting strong to enter into the battle of life, and shall conduct ourselves heroically in all its controversies. We humbly commit ourselves to Thy guidance ; Thou knowest all our life ; let Thy purpose be accomplished, whatsoever it be ; and may we say, Good is the will of the Lord ; not holy only but gracious : God's will be done. Thou knowest all that we desire ; grant unto us all that we need. We often speak our wants before Thee ; sometimes we conceal our necessities : listen not to the utterance of our ignorance, but to the cry of our penitence, and grant us peace at the Cross. Blessed Cross, may we ever be found there, waiting and wondering, asking questions, and breathing prayers, confessions, and thanksgivings ; and at the end a great light shall shine upon the Cross, and we shall see all its love. We praise Thee, we magnify Thee, we laud Thee with great laudation, because we love Thee, and in Christ's sweet eternal Name we give ourselves to Thee.

The Lord's blessing be upon us as a family ; give us the spirit of adoration, the spirit of supplication, and work in us that sacred vigilant desire which looks out for blessings, and hails them with joy in their descent. The Lord remember our absent ones, and make all heaven shine upon them with promise and blessing. Now be with us, the one Light and the only Joy, till we are gathered into the house that is above. *Amen.*

SUNDAY.]

[Scripture Reading: MATTHEW xii. 1-21.]

*" This day at Thy creating word,
First o'er the earth the light was poured,—
O Lord, this day upon us shine,
And fill our souls with light Divine.*

*" This day the Lord for sinners slain,
In might victorious rose again,—
O Jesu, may we raised be
From death of sin, to life in Thee.*

*" This day the Holy Spirit came
With fiery tongues of cloven flame :—
O Spirit, fill our hearts this day
With grace to hear, and grace to pray.*

*" O day of Light, and Life, and Grace !
From earthly toils sweet resting place !
Thy hallowed hours, best gift of love,
Give we again to God above."*

ALMIGHTY GOD, we cannot tell what we are, what we say, what we do; our life is a continuance of mistakes, and we daily convict ourselves of error. Put within us, we humbly pray Thee, Thy Holy Spirit, the Spirit of fear, and judgment, and understanding, and hope, and rest: and acting under the inspiration of Thy Spirit we shall have joy unspeakable, and peace that passeth understanding. Why dost Thou try us so? Are not Thy disciplines sometimes as tortures? Dost Thou not vex us, and search us, and turn us upside down in every purpose, baffling our will, turning aside our counsel, and plunging us into darkness that has no end and meaning to our poor understanding? Help us to believe that this is Thy way, that we are on the road home, though now we be in the wilderness, and now crossing the fair garden-land where the summer lies in all its richness. Show us that Thy way lies through all climes, and that still we are pursuing the right direction, though now cold winds strike us, and now the heat be intolerable. Give us width and reach of outlook. Help us to look at things unseen and eternal, to lay hold of those things which cannot be touched by the hand, and enter into the mystery of the words, The just shall live by faith, and, We walk by faith, and not by sight. If Thou wilt enable us by all the sufficiency and tenderness of Thy grace to enter into this mystery of

being, we shall have no more sorrow—our vexation will be brought to a peaceful end, and the battle which tries our strength shall end in victory which gladdens the soul.

Thou knowest what secret sorrow each heart has to bear, what griefs there are without words, the anguish that cannot be explained or brought under the influence of human sympathy. But there is a light above the brightness of the sun, and that light can find out this inner darkness, and chase away its last lingering shadow, and fill the inmost sanctuary of the soul with tender glory. When we leave our own dwelling, and go up to Thy solemn sanctuary, may we there hear voices not to be heard elsewhere. We pray Thee that this day there may be in our hearts whisperings of angels, breathings of the Holy Spirit, communications from Heaven. Thou hast innumerable ministries—influences we cannot name obey Thee—send them to us, we humbly pray, as ministering spirits to heal our wounds, and to give us a moment's rest that we may take breath again and recover the wasted hope of our heart.

We pray for those whom we love; give them wisdom, thoughtfulness, consideration: give them also zeal in Thy cause, an ever-deepening interest in the affairs and purposes of Thy kingdom: cleanse them with the sanctification that is of heaven, and make them pure with Divine holiness itself. The Lord hear our prayer, and exceed all our desires, for the sake of Him who died for us. *Amen.*

A FAMILY LITANY.

May be used separately, or after any of the prayers. The response is so short, that even little children may repeat it.

Into Thy presence, Lord, we come with our household praise and prayer.

Lord hear us.

For health, and home, and friends, we bless Thee.

Lord hear us.

For food, and rest, and shelter, we thank Thee.

Lord hear us.

Bless all our friends with health and joy.

Lord hear us.

Bless those who work for us, and care for us.

Lord hear us.

Be gracious to all masters and servants, all thinkers and labourers, all teachers and scholars.

Lord hear us.

Lord Jesus, make this a truly happy home.

Lord hear us.

Bless all our friends present and absent.

Lord hear us.

Be near every one of us this day, at work or at school, in sickness or in health, in sorrow or in joy.

Lord hear us.

Help us to be patient with one another, to be gentle to one another, and always to forgive one another.

Lord hear us.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our heavenly Father, and the comfort and fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

OUR FATHER, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread ; And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; But deliver us from evil : For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever. *Amen.*

WORDS OF THE HEART.

COME to me, Saviour, and whisper in my soul. Let me have some special message ; some word that shall be all mine. I want a great word that will fill my soul ; yea, so fill it that the enemy cannot be heard when he comes to tempt me to do wrong. Saviour, hear me!

LORD, be mine. I need all Thy grace. How great a sinner I am Thou only knowest. My whole heart has sinned. Every thought has gone astray. I need all Calvary. Thou wilt not forsake me, for then wouldst Thou turn away from the Cross, and forget Golgotha. I look for Thee through my tears. Lord Jesus, even now stoop to me, and take away all my sorrow.

I WOULD steal away to be alone with Jesus. I love the Son of God. He knows me in every thought and feeling. He can help when all others fail. I will tell Him all, and He will answer me in love. Jesus knows the healing plants, for they all grow in the garden of His love. Saviour, speak and bid me come to Thee now.

SAVIOUR, where Thou art is no darkness. Thou art the Dayspring. Thou art the Morning Star. Without Thee there is nought but darkness, nought but death. Lord of light, shine upon me, that I may know something of heaven's glorious summer.

SENTENCES.

[The following Sentences may be introduced into the general family prayer as occasion may require. The conductor of Family worship should carefully examine the Sentences, to see which of them will best suit the circumstances of the household, and select the place in the prayer where they can be most appropriately introduced.]

BIRTHDAY.

GIVER OF ALL LIFE, we bless Thee for the life whose birthday has once more come round. All praise be Thine for the goodness of the past. May this birthday be the beginning of the brightest day, and bring with it the sure pledge and seal of a blessed immortality.

THE LITTLE STRANGER.

WE give Thee humble and hearty thanks for the little stranger in our midst. We receive it as the loving gift of God, and would pray for wisdom to train the tender life for the service of Jesus. The Lord abundantly bless the mother and the child, and on the whole house cause the light of His smile to rest.

BABY ILL.

THINK of our baby we pray Thee, Father of us all. Thou knowest all the trouble and can'st take it all away. We want to keep the little loved one, but it is Thine, not ours. Spare the life we love so much ; yet if it be better otherwise, then keep closely to us, that we may some day be able to say, Thy will be done.

THE SICK CHILD.

MOST MERCIFUL FATHER, we now lovingly commend unto Thee our child who is ill. Thou knowest every pain which the human frame can suffer. We bless Thee that Thou dost sympathise with us in all sorrow and loss. May the sufferer know the power of the grace of God in this hour of weakness. Be very tender where the affliction is very great, and where the heart is made afraid by great clouds, may it also be comforted by the assured presence of Thy Holy Spirit. Lord God Almighty, give us one and all the spirit of resignation to Thy blessed will.

FATHER, we would bring our little suffering one before Thee, and ask for all needed blessing. Thou knowest all weakness, all pain, all fear. Lord, look upon the little one, and cheer the hearts made sore by this affliction. We praise the Shepherd who carries the lambs in His bosom, and trust all to Him.

FOR the poor little sick child we pray Thee. Jesus, Thou lovest the little ones; Thou carriest the lambs in Thy bosom. Pity the little sufferer, and spare the little life for which we pray. This is the wish of our hearts, yet we desire humbly to say, Not our will, but Thine, be done.

CHILD LEAVING HOME.

WE pray Thee, heavenly Father, at this time, go with our child who is about to leave the parental roof. Guide every step, direct every thought, sanctify every affliction, and may the whole issue of life be to the glory of God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We commend our child again most lovingly to Thy tender care and continual keeping.

THE PRODIGAL.

FATHER, pity us whilst we think of one who has grieved Thee much and made our hearts desolate. Oh, follow the prodigal, and turn the wanderer's feet homewards. Thou knowest what we would say if we could. Lord, read what is written on our hearts.

THE LORD hear us on account of those who never pray for themselves, those who are aliens and prodigals, who have broken every vow, dishonoured every covenant, and have gone far away into the bleak wilderness of sin. The Lord's Gospel flee after them like a saving angel, and flash upon them some home-light, or strike in their hearts some tender chord, that shall bring them back again, that there may be rejoicing on earth and in heaven.

SUDDEN BEREAVEMENT.

THY judgments, Lord, are a great deep. We know not the meaning of our daily loss and daily sorrow. Thou cuttest down the lives of men at a stroke, and as with a flood Thou carriest away their strength and confidence. Lord God Almighty, pity our friends who have been suddenly desolated, and lead them to the Cross for healing and for consolation. May the suddenness of Thy coming lead us all to number our days.

BEREAVEMENT.

WE remember this day our friends who have been recently bereaved. Lord, bind up the broken heart, and send light upon those who sit in great darkness. In due time may those who are bereaved be enabled to say, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.

BEREAVEMENT.]

SHOW us that what has happened is under Thy providence, and that what we mourn is a blessing in disguise; teach us that our bereavements may become our inheritances; and that the dark cloud which rests above the home-roof is there but for a moment, and when it has dropped its lesson of darkness the sun shall return, and they that trust in the Lord shall be glad with unspeakable joy.

THERE are tears in some eyes, because Thou hast made the house dark with new sorrow. Thou hast shaken the foundations of the dwelling place by an unexpected storm. They look, and they see not; they grope, and there is nothing to touch. O Thou who dost not bereave willingly, but for sound and future enrichment, speak to such the gospel of consolation, and let it so enter the heart as to lift the Christian soul above all fear and gloom and doubt, and enable it to say, He hath done all things well. Good when He gives, supremely good, nor less when He denies. Thus the valley shall have its song as well as the sunny height, and together they shall cause the hallelujah of trust and adoration to rise to the opening heavens.

SOME lives are full of weariness, wanting to die, yet shrinking from death. Some hearts are touched with their first deep sorrow; they never knew what grief was before; but just now they see how dark the night can be,—every star blown out, the whole heaven one dense cloud. No sound of coming friend, no music in the cold wind. Come Thyself to such. Speak gently and healingly to them, and if they may but touch the hem of Thy garment, Thou Man of the Cross, they shall be young and strong and glad.

BEREAVEMENT.]

WE thank Thee for all Thy goodness, and we bless Thee that we see goodness now where once we did not see it. The goodness of the Lord is in the sorrow of life as well as in its joy : this Thou hast taught us by experience ; but for the darkness we had never seen the stars ; but for sorrow of soul, we had never known the richer music of the sanctuary. Thou hast wrought a miracle in our hearts, in that we are now enabled to say, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the Name of the Lord. Surely there is nothing beyond this which Thou canst teach the poor human heart ; this is the Lord's prayer, this is the Lord's miracle. Help us to carry our burden ; say unto us, It is but a mile farther, a few hours longer, another respiration, and all the years of time are outlived, and the sunshine of eternity begins. We need such sweet music, for the heart is often sore, and the faculties are overcome, and the whole man reels because of weakness. When heart and flesh do fail, come to us, Thou living loving One, and renew all Thy grace, and do again Thy mightiest works.

THE LORD heal the wounded, the Lord carry the tired in His arms, the Lord bless the unblest, and send dew upon the withering flower. Where Thou hast sent Thy bereaving providence, send Thine all-healing grace ; where Thou hast dug the deep grave in the heart, the Lord fill it up with flowers, and so set upon it the sign and seal of a sure and glorious resurrection. O Thou who art the Resurrection and the Life, comfort the stricken heart, and dry the mourners' tear. Where the house is dark, do Thou kindle an unexpected fire ; where the life is impoverished, do Thou come with all the consolations of Thy grace.

THE DEATH OF A CHRISTIAN.

WE bless Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, on behalf of all Thy children who have safely reached the land of light and rest. By Thy grace we think of them not as dead but as gone before. Over our loss we mourn, but over their gain we rejoice with exceeding joy. As our departed friends followed Christ so may we follow them, that they and we together may at last unite in the blessed and eternal service of heaven, through the power of the all-reconciling Cross.

THANKSGIVING FOR A SAINTLY LIFE.

WE bless Thee, O Father, for the fragrant memory of the dear one whom Thou hast taken to Thyself. May the recollection of such excellence remain with us as a comfort and a stimulus. We bless Thee for all beautiful lives, all human tenderness, all spiritual heroism. Lord, give us daily grace, that in faith and patience we may follow those who have gone before, and rejoin them in the eternal fellowship of heavenly service.

FAMILY TROUBLE.

THOU knowest, Lord, that this is a day of trouble in our family. Our hearts are full of sorrow. We flee unto the Lord as unto a strong refuge, for His mercy endureth for ever. Most merciful Father, in the multitude of Thy tender mercies help us and save us, we humbly beseech Thee.

SPECIAL TROUBLE.

LORD, help us in view of the sad trouble which this day makes us afraid. We put ourselves into Thy hands saying, Nothing is too hard for the Lord. Father, give us at this time grace upon grace.

FRIENDS IN TROUBLE.

FOR all who ask our special prayers we now seek Thy blessing. Thou knowest what is best for them, so we leave them lovingly in Thy tender hands. In the hour of their need may friends be many, and specially may Christ be near.

TRUST IN TROUBLE.

WHEN our foundations are removed, when the flowers are plucked from the tree, when all the promise of fruit is nipped and killed by the cruel, cruel frost, and when the one ewe-lamb is taken, and the only child is dead, help us to glorify God. This will be Thy supreme miracle ; but, blessed be Thy Name, it lies within the compass of almightiness, and is within the purpose of Thy grace. We would sing hymns at night-time ; we would walk with dignity in the midst of the fiery furnace, and would say : Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

SICKNESS IN THE HOUSE.

NURSE our sick ones. We would hardly part with the sick chamber, for the house would be poor without it ; we would ask Thee to turn suffering into strength, and through the tears of human weakness that Thy suffering ones may be able to see more of the Father-God.

HEALTH RESTORED.

RECEIVE our special thanks, we pray Thee, in the case of health restored. May renewed health mean renewed consecration, and may much service express much thankfulness. God be praised for His restoring mercy.

HEALTH RESTORED.]

ALMIGHTY GOD, we thank Thee at this moment because of the recovery of one whom we love from affliction and weakness and great fear. It is Thine to recover us when we are cast down ; may we be Thine to serve in the hour of restoration. Teach us that our health is given not that it may be wasted in sin, but that it may be expended in holy and useful action. Hear our special thanksgiving at this moment, and mercifully continue Thy goodness unto us, for the sake of Thy dear Son Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOOD NEWS.

WE bless Thee for the good news by which we have been made glad this day. For all that cheers the heart and brightens the spirit we bless and praise the Giver of all good. Thanks be unto the Lord for every ray of light, and every note of music.

A THANKSGIVING.

DEAR SAVIOUR, with what words shall we come before Thee when our hearts are full of love and praise? Gracious and merciful art Thou, and ever ready to give good gifts unto them that ask Thee. We come with an offering of praise because Thou hast loaded us with benefits. Our whole life stands in Thy blessing, as the summer unfolds itself in Thy sunshine. Our hope is a light of Thine own kindling. Mercifully hear us when we praise Thy goodness and seek Thy protection.

THANKS FOR FOOD.

BLESS our daily bread, we pray Thee, and feed us with the Bread of Life.

PERSONAL ACCIDENT.

BE pleased to overrule the accident which has occurred, so that the result may bring good to the sufferer and to all concerned. Forbid that further evil should arise from the circumstance, and make us all thankful that we may reasonably hope for full restoration.

CARES OF THIS WORLD.

WHEN work is scarce, or business is difficult, or all things seem to be against us, then may Thy comforts abound in our souls. May we then show what miracles can be wrought by faith in Jesus. May we be enabled quietly and lovingly to wait upon God, and thus magnify the power and excellence of the Saviour's Cross.

FOR DIVINE HELP.

O CHRIST the Saviour, truly Thou art the King of Glory. Thou only canst fill the world with light. All we want we find in Jesus. This day be our Sun and Shield. This day prepare the way before us lest we stumble and fall. This day graciously show us Thy salvation. Heal us, dear Saviour, and magnify Thyself in our obedience and joy.

FOR HOLINESS.

SAVIOUR ETERNAL, let us rest upon Thy love. We have no other refuge. Thou only art our desire and our rest. Conquer our evil nature, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, work in us the holiness of God. By Thy precious blood take out of our life the last stain of guilt.

PENITENCE.

MOST merciful and loving God, look Thou upon the penitence of the heart that is this day broken before Thee on account of sin. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise. Behold the tears of the penitent, and hear the sighing of the self-accusing soul, and grant that instead of the spirit of fear there may come into the heart the spirit of adoption. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. If we confess our sins, Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Lord, hear the confession which is this day made at the foot of the Cross, and grant unto the repentant soul a sense of Thy forgiving love, through Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

BAD HARVEST.

LORD, be pleased to reconcile our minds to events over which we have no control. We mourn the lack of harvest, and pray that it may not mean lack of bread to the poor. Teach us that man shall not live by bread alone, and assure us that if we trust in the Lord and do good, we shall dwell in the land, and verily we shall be fed. Lord, comfort those who mourn.

INCLEMENT WEATHER.

WE pray Thee at this time to hear us on behalf of all who are suffering through the inclemency of the weather. We would humbly say: Thy will be done; yet as Thy will is love, we implore Thee to save us from every disaster which can affect the health, the trade, and the peaceful progress of the world.

FRIENDS ON THE SEA.

AT this time we lovingly commend unto Thee our friends who are on the sea. Give the winds and the waves charge concerning them. Take away from them the spirit of fear, and give them the spirit of rejoicing in sight of the wonders of Thine hand. Bless them with a sense of protection, and grant unto them that their object in voyaging may be abundantly realised. The sea is Thine, and the fulness thereof, as is the solid ground. Teach our dear travelling friends that all things are in God's hand, and that God's hand is at once all-mighty and all-gentle. In due time may we meet again to magnify the providence by which we have been defended and sustained.

PARTING.

FATHER in heaven, we commend unto Thy care our friend now about to leave us. Make all the way clear, and turn every trouble into a new joy. They are well kept whom Thou dost keep; therefore in Thy hands we would leave all our loved ones this day.

DOMESTIC SERVANTS.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, unto our servants who wait upon us daily, all they need of heavenly grace. We bless Thee for all faithfulness, honesty, and useful service. May we all know that we have a Master in heaven, and may it be our daily business to know His will and to do it all. Help us to understand that Thou Thyself dost set us in our appointed places in life, and may we accept Thine appointment not only with resignation but with thankfulness. Thus do Thou bless our whole house, from the oldest to the youngest, and inspire us one and all with a kind and helpful family affection.

THE NATION.

AS a family we would remember the nation this day. Guide the rulers of the people, and save the people themselves from delusion. Overrule the events which are now occurring, and come quickly Thou whose right it is to reign.

THE QUEEN AND COUNTRY.

BLESS our country; God save the Queen; establish the throne in righteousness, and in the security of an honourable patriotism. Direct our legislators and senators, teaching all our leading and influential men what they ought to do in critical times. Sanctify their deliberations to the good of the empire, and to the good of all peoples who are interested in our conduct. Regard the whole world. Bring all oppression, dishonourableness, cruelty, tyranny, wrongdoing, to a speedy end; put an end to the same Thyself, Thou Mighty One, so that there may be no renewal of the iniquity.

FOR ALL MANKIND.

GIVER of all, we conclude our prayer by asking large blessings for all mankind. Send out Thy light and Thy truth through all the earth like the glory of a new morning, and the fruitage of a heavenly summer. Our own land bless with Thy favour. Prosper our commerce and our literature. Regard all our neighbours with grace, and bless their souls with Thy peace. Forgive all our enemies, and turn their hearts towards peace and love. Heal the sick. Gather the lambs in Thine arms. Fill up our broken prayer with Thine own knowledge of every want and pain.

UNSPOKEN DESIRES.

LORD, Thou knowest all we would say if we could. Read our hearts. Look at the sins we dare not put into words! Consider the frailties we are ashamed to confess. By the power of the Cross come to us and give us answers even to unspoken prayers.

THE DISABLED WORKER.

WE commend unto Thee our friend who has worked well and can work no longer. May he be resigned to Thy will, and find continual comfort in the fact that the Lord reigneth. Lord, help him to serve Thee in waiting as he has served Thee in labour. May we ever be ready either to run at Thy commandment, or to stand still and see the salvation of God.

MINISTERS.

WE commend unto Thee this day all Thy ministering servants who shall go forth to speak the everlasting Gospel. Sustain them in their holy service; grant unto them many seals to the ministry, and give them many souls for their hire. May the people hear and fear, and turn unto the Lord with full purpose of heart. We commend unto Thee also all Sunday School teachers, all city missionaries, all visitors of the sick, all who shall in any wise endeavour to do good this day. Grant unto them patience, sympathy, insight into character, and all Christian gentleness, that they may order their words and their conduct aright, and at the end may be rewarded with great blessing. They all seek to serve Thy Son Jesus Christ, and to magnify His gracious Cross: the

Lord help them in all their service, and the Lord reward them for all their deeds. We pray this in the Name of Jesus Christ, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be eternal adoration. *Amen.*

NEW BUSINESS.

ALmighty GOD, Thou knowest the new business and enterprise to which we are about to set our hands. We believe it is right for us to attempt this endeavour, and yet, seeing how ignorant we are, we would not take one step at the bidding of our own conceit or selfishness. Except Thy blessing go with us, carry us not up hence. If this enterprise can be carried out honestly, Thou wilt not fail to bless it. If there is any difficulty about it, or any sinfulness which we have not realised, the Lord direct us therein, and especially save us from doing wrong. May our abundance be sanctified, and may our poverty be no hindrance to our spiritual progress. We commend the enterprise to Thee, and we ask to be wisely directed in it, and especially to be kept from all evil. God bless all honest labour, all high endeavour, all purpose framed and directed in the spirit of the gospel, and grant that our lives upon earth may not be lived in vain. In all these matters we beseech Thy good care and Thy tender mercies, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*"Thee may I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes my inmost substance see;
And labour on at Thy command,
And offer all my works to Thee.*

*"Give me to bear Thine easy yoke,
And every moment watch and pray;
And still to things eternal look,
And hasten to Thy glorious day.*

*"For Thee delightfully employ
Whate'er Thy bounteous grace hath given;
And run my even course with joy,
And closely walk with Thee to heaven."*

Amen.

SECTION III.

MEDITATIONS AND READINGS

FOR THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO
ATTEND PUBLIC WORSHIP.

“ **L**EAD, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
 Lead Thou me on ;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
 Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet ; I do not ask to see
The distant scene : one step enough for me.

“ I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou
 Shouldst lead me on ;
I loved to choose and see my path ; but now
 Lead Thou me on.
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will : remember not past years.

“ So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
 Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone ;
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.”

Amen.

MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS.

ON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress : my God ; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust : His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night ; nor for the arrow that flieth by day ; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness ; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand ; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation ; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder : the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him : I will set him on high, because he hath known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him : I will be with him in trouble ; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation.—PSALM xci.

GOD can be with us in the house and in loneliness when we cannot wait upon Him in the public sanctuary. Specially will He be with those who are afflicted, and those who are called upon to watch by the bed of sickness. This day I would call to memory the sweet promises of my Lord, and rest upon them as upon a sure foundation. What wondrous words are gathered around the Name of Jesus. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth : men shall be blessed in Him ; all nations shall call Him blessed." Thus the Saviour is set before us as a great natural blessing. In another place He is represented as a living Friend, a fearless and constant

Protector : "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Then again He is likened to another natural blessing—"Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." Laying His hand as if by right upon both nature and life, He sets Himself forth under a most pleasing figure: "I am the Vine; ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." All this would be tender in loveliness, but it is not enough: it is poetry, but not the deepest realisation of the mercy of God. Hear, then, the deepest truth, and O, my soul, live upon it day by day evermore—"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." There we come in sight of the Cross! The wondrous Cross! "God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Lord, may this in very deed be my experience. The world mocks me. The world cannot keep its worthless promises. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. In Christ all God's promises are sealed. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." By Christ alone have we the means of sanctification: "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Christ once for all." "Both He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Then why should I be lonely any more, or sad, or overcome of fear? Lord, help me to take Thee at Thy word, and to live upon Thy promises. Send the dawn of Sabbath upon my soul, and make my dwelling-place Thy chosen sanctuary. The Lord

bless His people with peace, and may they who have worshipped in the great congregation bring rich blessings to their friends at home. God help me. "I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand."

*"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,—
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."*

*"Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands.
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone."*

*"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace:
Foul, I to the Fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."*

*"While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyes shall close in death,
When I soar through tracts unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment-throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."*

Amen.

THIRST OF SOUL.

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast Thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is Thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.—PSALM xlii.

LORD, I want Thee in my heart to quench the thirst of my soul. I cry out for God that I may not die. O that I knew where I might find Him. Yet I do know,

for He is to be found at the Cross! God is in Christ, and in Him He seeks to save me. Lord, for this good news I thank Thee with all my love.

The world cannot give me what I want. The world gives much yet it gives nothing. I have plucked flowers, but, lo, they faded and died, and became an offence unto me. I have gone forth at night to count the stars, but they soon hid their light and left me poor. I have tried to make something of the world's joys, but they turned to bitterness, and I was glad to forget their noisomeness. God only can fill and bless the heart of man. Come, then, to me as if in secret love to comfort my waiting and aching heart, and I shall be truly glad. Then it shall be spring-time in my soul, and all the snows of winter I shall forget as a dream of trouble. O my Saviour, let me see Thy countenance, let me hear Thy voice; for sweet is Thy voice, and Thy countenance is comely.

Fill my mind this day with high and noble thoughts. Raise me above the cloud of fear, and save me from the storm of trouble. May my weakness be my strength, and may the things that hinder me be but so many occasions of larger prayer. Thou dost not willingly afflict any of Thy children. Thy hand is gentle. Thine is the great heart of the true shepherd. I am Thine; do with me what seemeth good in Thy sight, only forsake me not, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me, O God of my salvation.

How long and cold is even a summer day when my Saviour is not near me! When Christ is near there is no winter; nor is there any night, nor is there any unwelcome pain. Christ can make us more than conquerors even over death itself. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Lord, keep my home, make my bed,

and spread my table, that through Thy meaner gifts I may see the fulness of Thy larger love. Holy Spirit, show me the things of Christ, and make me rich with His grace. I want to see a light above the brightness of the sun, and to feel a peace which passeth understanding. I will trust the Lord. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. Blessed be His holy Name for ever and ever.

*"I worship Thee, sweet will of God!
And all Thy ways adore,
And every day I live I seem
To love Thee more and more.*

*"I love to kiss each print where Thou
Hast set Thine unseen feet:
I cannot fear Thee, blessed will,
Thine empire is so sweet.*

*"I have no cares, O blessed will!
For all my cares are Thine:
I live in triumph, Lord, for Thou
Hast made Thy triumph mine.*

*"Ill, that He blesses, is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet will."*

Amen.

GOD'S GLORY.

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom Thou hast made to play therein. These wait all upon Thee; that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in His works. He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: He toucheth the hills, and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.—PSALM civ. 24-34.

ALTHOUGH the glory of the Lord is necessarily above all our imagination, yet it is set forth in Holy Scripture as a subject of thought and praise. It does the mind good to think upon subjects that are much beyond its power. The faculty of reverence needs to be excited and cultivated. We

cannot revere that which is lower than we are, though we may admire it on account of its tender beauty ; we must look up and behold the heavens, and try to number the stars, that we may see how small we are in relation to the sum-total of things. If the house be great, what must the Builder be ? The words of Scripture bearing upon the glory of God are worthy of the exalted theme :—" They saw the God of Israel : and there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness. . . . And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel." Even if this be but poetry, it is poetry worthy of the grand occasion. But such poetry is impossible ; it has not entered into the heart of man to dream a true conception of God ; we can tell by the very words that are used that there must have been some communication from on high to the spirit of man. When God revealed Himself to Moses He accommodated Himself to the faculties of that great man, saying, "Thou canst not see My face : for there shall no man see Me, and live . . . it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put Thee in a clift of the rock." It is in the clift of that rock I would always stand. By that rock I would signify the Lord Jesus Christ, and say unto Him with all my heart :

" Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

It is instructive to notice how the Lord combines with a revelation of His glory a revelation of His very heart. When the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with Moses and proclaimed the Name of the Lord, He described Himself as "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." Beyond these last words the New Testament itself has never gone.

The Gospel is in the Old Testament as well as in the New. Jesus Christ did not come to reveal a new God, but to reveal the Eternal Father. Let me seek for God in the Old Testament, for there I shall find Him in the very tenderest aspects of His nature, as well as in those aspects which appal and even affright the imagination and the conscience. We may well say with Job: "Shall not His excellency make you afraid? and His dread fall upon you?" It would seem as if abject prostration before God were the only fitting attitude for the human soul. There is no number of His armies: He is in the height of heaven; and behold the height of the stars how high they are, yet His throne is above them all. God thundereth marvellously with His voice; great things doth He, which we cannot comprehend: with God is terrible majesty. Yet this very God reveals Himself unto us as "merciful and gracious." He numbereth the stars, He bindeth up also the broken in heart. It is well for us to be still and to know the true God; and it is profitable to us to describe God to ourselves by all the names which are appropriate to His eternal majesty. We do not wonder that the prophet should say, "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty. . . . All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity." How then shall we come before the Lord otherwise than in a posture of humiliation and fear? Yet this is the God who has revealed Himself even in the Old Testament as "merciful and gracious."

O LORD my God, help me evermore to recognise Thee as the Inhabitant of eternity whose Name is holy. I would remember that heaven is Thy throne, and the earth is Thy footstool, and that Thou art a great King whose Name is

dreadful among the heathen. Yet I would address Thee as Father, Shepherd, Redeemer, Friend. When I know Thee in Christ Jesus I know that Thy glory is Thy goodness, and Thy goodness is Thy glory, for the Lord God is one. I will call Thee the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore. Whilst I would remember that our God is a consuming fire, I would also remember that God is love. Help me this day to think more deeply and tenderly of Thee than I have ever done, and may this in very deed be a Sabbath day in my soul. I am poor and weak and lonely, and am not meet to be called one of Thy children, but Thou wilt have compassion upon me in my feebleness, and Thou wilt make my solitude bright with Thy presence. Lord Jesus, love me, and save me : supply all my need according to Thy riches in glory : and through the blood of the everlasting covenant may I come with all Thy saints to the place where there shall be no night, no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God is the glory of the city. Bless all who are engaged in public worship this day ; give them the hearing ear and the understanding heart ; may they eat and drink abundantly at Thy banqueting table, O Thou who didst give Thy flesh as food for the world, and Thy blood for the quenching of the heart's burning thirst.

*" When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.
Should earth against my soul engage,
And hellish darts be hurled,
Then I can smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning world.*

*" Let cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall ;
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heaven, my all !
There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."*

Amen.

GOD'S GLORY PRAISED.

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth His mercy and His truth. My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let Thy glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise Thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto Thee among the nations. For Thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and Thy truth unto the clouds. Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let Thy glory be above all the earth.

[PSALM lvii.]

LAST Sabbath morning I contemplated "the glory of God" with a view to the excitement of reverent emotion. This morning I may think of the glory of God as a subject of praise. It is wonderful to notice how in the Old Testament the very majesty of God is made the subject of holy song. The truly spiritual heart would bring all things to music:—"I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea." Instead of falling down in abject fear before the appalling sight, the prophet of the Lord finds a new subject to be celebrated in sacred praise:—

"I will publish the Name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God: He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment." What has to be done with this great God and terrible? under whose feet the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water, and the mountains melted from before Him?

The answer to these inquiries is given in many a beautiful passage; notably in the Book of Nehemiah—"Bless the Lord your God for ever and ever: and blessed be Thy glorious Name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise: our God, the Great, the Mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy." These were not mere idolaters in the sight of God, worshipping that which we dread, or paying homage to that which is beyond our intellectual conception and influence. We are humble contrite worshippers in the presence of the very majesty of heaven. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His Name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Because the Lord is great, is He to be feared? The Psalmist says, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God." Not only would the Psalmist recognise the sovereignty of God, but He would connect with that sovereignty his heart's own loving consent: "Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, let Thy glory be above all the earth." Nor is this a praise of mere magnitude, or splendour, or pomp of any kind. The ancient worshippers saw in God the highest moral perfection: "Thy righteousness also is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto Thee?" Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne; mercy and truth shall go before Thy face." "Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." Thus we are not called upon to worship a mere abstraction, or the highest idea of pomp and circumstance; we are exhorted to worship One who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity with the least degree of allowance, and to bow down before Him who is merciful and gracious. Whilst His greatness is unsearchable, His righteousness also is beyond our poor conception. Though the Most High must humble Himself

to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth, yet He is our Father and the Giver of all good. There is not much said in the New Testament about the glory of the Lord, yet it is not wholly omitted by New Testament writers. When the angels announced the birth of Christ, they sang, "Glory to God in the highest." In some of his ascriptions, Paul recognises the greatness of God: "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever." In writing to Timothy, the Apostle says: "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting." Jude also recognises the same attributes, saying, "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." The Book of Revelation is full of praise of the majesty and glory of God. Speech would seem to be too poor for such a theme, so music is invoked to help the soul's expression. Marvellous is the song of those who fill the upper sanctuary; for evermore they say in resounding song: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

*"Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise
to Thee:*

*Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity!*

*"Holy, Holy, Holy! all the Saints adore
Thee,*

*Casting down their golden crowns around
the glassy sea;*

*Cherubim and Seraphim falling down before
Thee,*

Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

*"Holy, Holy, Holy! though the darkness
hide Thee,*

*Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory
may not see,*

*Only Thou art holy, there is none beside
Thee*

Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

*"Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy Name,
in earth, and sky, and sea:*

*Holy, Holy, Holy; Merciful and Mighty!
God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity."*

GOD'S GLORY PRAISED.]

O LORD, I will praise Thee for Thy greatness, I will say, Blessed be the glory of the Lord! and with the angels that adore Thee on high I would say, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. May Thy saints delight to bless Thee, and to praise Thy majesty in their songs. Let them praise the Name of the Lord: for His Name alone is excellent; His glory is above the heavens. I would praise Thee for Thy mighty acts, and I would praise Thee according to Thine excellent greatness. When Thy prophets exhort us to sing unto the Lord for He hath done excellently, I would say, This is known in all the earth, and my own heart hath tested much of the goodness of God. May sufferers magnify the Lord in the fire; may those who are perplexed know that Thou art great in counsel and mighty in work. Thou alone doest great wonders; oh work the wonder of Thy grace in my poor heart; and in my character may there be somewhat of moral majesty, so that men may take notice of me that I have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. Purify me according to Thine own holiness, and cleanse me from every stain of evil. May I feel myself to be an offence unto Thy creation until my heart has been cleansed by the blood of Christ. I pray this prayer at the Cross on which I see the dying Son of God. He died, the Just for the unjust. This is agony in very deed; yea, it is the travail of the Redeemer's soul. May Christ be formed in me the hope of glory, that carrying in my heart this inward and most precious glory, I may the more clearly see the meaning of all the light that is round about me. God be merciful to me a sinner. *Amen.*

GOD'S GOODNESS.

O give thanks unto the Lord ; for He is good : because His mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, that His mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that His mercy endureth for ever. Let them now that fear the Lord say, that His mercy endureth for ever. I called upon the Lord in distress : the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side ; I will not fear : what can man do unto me ? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me : therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. All nations compassed me about : but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them. They compassed me about ; yea, they compassed me about : but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. They compassed me about like bees ; they are quenched as the fire of thorns : for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them. Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall : but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous : the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted : the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore : but He hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness : I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord : this gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise Thee : for Thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing ; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it.—PSALM cxviii. 1-24.

I WILL this day think of the goodness of God. That is an expression which I find in the Old Testament, and it therefore seems to be the more precious to me. I expected to find in the Old Testament much about glory and majesty and greatness ; yet I remind myself once more that it is actually in the Old Testament that I find some of the sweetest and tenderest revelations of the Divine heart. Even in the Book of Exodus God is described as “abundant in goodness and truth.” In the Psalms I read of “Thy marvellous lovingkindness.” In that book of experience is this statement

—“good and upright is the Lord,” and again, “The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” It would seem as if the Book of Psalms were full of this one subject. “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” “How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings”; “The goodness of God endureth continually: I will wait on Thy Name; for it is good before Thy saints.” When the Psalmist exhorts the people to “Give thanks unto the Lord,” he assigns the reason for the exhortation, saying, O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good.” The Psalmist would have men praise God for His goodness in providence, even where they cannot see the inner or more spiritual goodness. “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. . . . Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.” When God reveals Himself through the prophet Jeremiah it is in these tender words, “I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” Even in the flood of his tears the prophet Jeremiah is not forgetful of God’s goodness, saying, “The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him.” Even in the midst of the denunciation of great judgments we find words beautiful as flowers in spring: “The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble.” It is interesting to compare what the New Testament says of God’s goodness with what is said concerning it in the Old Testament. The words of the New Testament are very simple, “He hath filled the hungry with good things”; “He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil”; “The goodness of God leadeth thee to

repentance"; "That our God would fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness"; "The kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared." If the New Testament is less elaborate in its praise of God's goodness, yet in three short words it comprehends the whole gospel of the Divine heart, "God is love."

*"Thy ceaseless, unexhausted love,
Unmerited and free,
Delights our evil to remove,
And help our misery.*

*"Thy goodness and Thy truth to me,
To every soul, abound:
A vast unfathomable sea,
Where all our thoughts are drowned.*

*"Faithful, O Lord, Thy mercies are,
A rock that cannot move:
A thousand promises declare
Thy constancy of love:*

*"Throughout the universe it reigns,
Unalterably sure;
And while the truth of God remains
His goodness must endure."*

O LORD, may my heart this day taste of Thy goodness, and may they who worship Thee in the great congregation abundantly utter the memory of Thy goodness. I bless Thee that I can say with all Thy saints, The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. The Lord is good, and His mercy is everlasting. May I not be hardened by Thy love. May I never grow so familiar with Thy grace as to presume upon it and take license to do that which is wrong. May I accept Thy very love as a discipline. Throw upon me the reins by which Thou wilt guide me in all my way, lest I be overcome of my own passion, and leave the path of light and pureness. If men being evil know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more wilt Thou give good things to them that ask Thee. Lord, I ask Thee to create within me a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within me, and this I ask in the Name of Jesus, to whom, with Thyself and the Holy Spirit, be the praise of all hearts in all worlds through all ages. *Amen.*

GOD'S DETAILED GOODNESS.

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ? Behold the fowls of the air : for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns ; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they ? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature ? And why take ye thought for raiment ? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith ? Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek :) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow : for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.—MATTHEW vi. 25-34.

THE goodness of God is not only the subject of general recognition and praise ; we are invited to look upon it in all its detailed action. The goodness of God is not an attribute only, it is an attribute in full exercise ; because it is good it does good, and in doing good it proves and establishes itself beyond all dispute. I will think of the goodness of God in the coming and going of the seasons—"Seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." We need have no fear in that direction. It is not in our power to control the procession of the seasons ; but we may confidently rest upon the word of the Lord, that these shall come and go so long as He wills them to visit the earth. When the Lord re-created the human race in the person of Noah and his sons, he provided meat for the whole family of man, saying, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you ; even as the green herb have I given you all things." We have nothing that we have not received. God openeth His hand and satisfieth

the desire of every living thing. The young lions roar and seek their meat from God. In the forest is the table of His bounty, as well as in the high places of civilisation. We are called upon to recognise the goodness of God in all the relations of life, and even in some circumstances that appear at first to be only distressing, if not positively evil. The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich : He bringeth low and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes and to make them inherit the throne of glory. We are too apt to look upon the affairs of life as self-governed, or as being at the mercy of some incalculable law which we call chance or fortune. The Biblical testimony is wholly against this atheistic view. "Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all ; and in Thine hand is power and might ; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." God handles the nations as a unit : before Him they are not many and tumultuous, they are one, and that one is in the hollow of His hand. "He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them : He enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again." The Lord made the house of the wild ass in the wilderness, and gave him dwellings in the barren land. "O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast : how excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O God ! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings." The Psalmist sees God in all the action of nature :—"Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it : Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water : Thou preparest them corn, when Thou hast so provided for it. . . . Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness ; and Thy paths drop fatness." Our family life is the creation of God. The household is His

Church. "God setteth the solitary in families : He bringeth out those which are bound in chains." Our perverted imagination will often only think of God as doing great things in the heavens above, but the Psalmist looked upon Him as doing all the little things on the earth beneath, saying, "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man : that he may bring forth food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." This is the right view to take of the goodness of God. Truly it is in the heaven above, but as truly it is round about my very feet. Everything in nature bears the signature Divine. God giveth food to all flesh, for His mercy endureth for ever. He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth ; He prepareth rain for the earth that the grass may grow upon the mountains ; He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. "Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in His season : He reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest."

If God is thus good in nature, and is thus mindful of the cattle which browse upon the hills, will He be unmindful of His children ? How much better is a man than a sheep ? If God takes care of oxen, will He not much more take care of those who are made in His own image and likeness ? And if God has done so much for the body, will He neglect the soul ? May we not reason from the less to the greater, saying, If God has done so much for the body which must perish, has He not done much more for the soul which may live with Him for ever ? If the living God has given us all things richly to enjoy, has He excluded Himself from the precious store ? May we not enjoy Him more than we

enjoy any of His works? Is not Christ the open and living way, through which we may enter into the very holy of holies and see God, as it were, face to face? I will not recognise the goodness of God merely in my meat and drink, in my house and garments; I will recognise that goodness in the higher aspects of grace, salvation, and holiness. God be merciful to me a sinner. Come by the way of the Cross into my heart, and work there all the miracle of grace. Make me a new creature in Christ Jesus. Take away all that is old and impure, untrue and unwise, and establish Thy kingdom in my heart evermore. So fill me with a sense of Thy goodness that I shall have no more any fear either of life or of death. May I rest in the goodness of the Lord, and be sure that He who has been with me in six troubles, will not forsake me in seven.

*" Father, how wide Thy glory shines!
How high Thy wonders rise!
Known through the earth by thousand signs,
By thousands through the skies.*

*" Those mighty orbs proclaim Thy power,
Their motions speak Thy skill,
And on the wings of every hour
We read Thy patience still.*

*" But when we view Thy strange design
To save rebellious worms,
Where vengeance and compassion join
In their divinest forms;*

*" Our thoughts are lost in reverent awe,
We love and we adore;
The highest angel never saw
So much of God before.*

*" Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dars a creature guess
Which of the glories brighter shone
The justice or the grace."*

ALmighty God, I am filled with wonder when I look back upon all that Thou hast done, which my eyes can see. How much more hast Thou done than is comprehended by my short vision! What I see overwhelms me. My soul is aflame with a great surprise. I look behind, and behold there is wonder; before me, and there is wonder; on my right hand and on my left I find wonder; and what is Thy blue sky all light but another infinite wonder? What

am I then that I should speak about it? I will think a little, I will stand with sacred awe before the mighty vision, and my heart shall burn with love because of the nearness of Thine invisible presence.

Prevent me falling into the folly of the foolish. May I be found amongst those who, knowing little, say little; who, filled with a great wonder, may at any time lift up their voices in a great song. I will read Thy wondrous Book and look upon the wondrous scene until I can see nothing more because of my tears, and hear nothing of the noises of time because of the tranquillity of eternal calm. I have seen wondrous sights by night and by day. The stars have spoken to me; the sun has poured down a gospel of light upon my way; all the winds have been full of odours caught in the upper gardens and brought away for my comfort. So I will hope, I will pray, I will look up. Thou hast come nearer to me than in all these wonders of nature: my heart is its own witness herein, and I know of a truth what is the meaning of glowing love and inspiring expectation.

Thou hast revealed Thyself to me in Jesus Christ Thy Son. I have treasured His words and pondered them in secret, and have applied them to my life's necessity and pain. Never man spake like this Man. My heart so says—not in times of frivolity and foolish excitement, but in darkness, in sorrow; when compunction for sin has made hell in my soul. Then I have seen the Saviour and looked upon the Cross—the only sight my eyes could bear, for in it was healing, and from it came redemption. I would walk with Jesus, even though my eyes be holden that I should not know Him. In His voice is gospel, in His touch is security, in His breath is benediction. Jesus, abide with me until the day be quite spent and the night be quite gone; yea, until the day break and the shadows flee away. *Amen.*

THE HOLINESS OF GOD.

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him ; and they were full of eyes within : and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power : for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.—REVELATION iv. 8—II.

I HAVE thought of His glory and of His goodness, may it not be said that His holiness goes before them both and follows them both ; may it not be said that His holiness stands between the two as explaining their existence and their action ? God has always represented Himself as holy, in the sense of infinite purity, and in the sense of infinite separateness or distance from everything which His hands had made. “ Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” The very ground is made holy by the presence of God ! But is He not present everywhere ? Yea, verily, and therefore we should look upon the whole earth as consecrated, and as being the very house of God and the very gate of heaven. Everywhere we should say, “ Lo, God is here, and I knew it not ” ; then we should be reverent in spirit, and our ear shall be quickened to hear the Divine going. “ Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods ? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness ? ” When God exhorts His people to be holy He gives them the reason, saying, “ Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.” When men who were guilty would have offered formal worship, the leader of the people rebuked them, saying, “ Ye cannot serve the Lord : for He is an holy God.” In a great agony of soul the patriarch asks, “ Shall mortal man be more just than God ?

shall a man be more pure than his Maker ? ” “ The heavens are not clean in His sight.” The Psalmist says, “ Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel ” ; and he calls upon the people to “ give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.” God’s righteousness is compared unto the great mountain, and the majesty of heaven is represented as sitting upon the throne of His holiness. When the angels lift up their voices in praise and adoration on high, they say, “ Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts : the whole earth is full of His glory.” When the Lord is described in His relation to men it is in these words, “ The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy.” When He speaks of man, He says, “ I am God and not man ; the holy One in the midst of thee.” Here again I am confronted by more than a subject for mere intellectual speculation. The holiness of God is not given to me as an intellectual study, but as a moral example. How deceitful is the heart ! how gladly would I think of the holiness of God, and allow myself to believe that contemplation is all that is required of me ! Let me listen to the exhortation which calls me to discipline : “ Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.” “ As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.” “ Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name ? for Thou only art holy.” If we be in Christ Jesus we shall know the meaning of the words, “ Ye have an unction from the Holy One ” : we are anointed to holiness, we are sealed for purity ; we are called to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. What is it that keeps me back from vital communion with my Father ? It is nothing but sin. “ He knoweth vain men : He seeth wickedness also.” Oh that I might have grace to consider this. I ought to be able to say with Job, “ Thou lookest narrowly into all my paths ; Thou settest a print upon the

heels of my feet." Let me hate the sin which drives from me the Guest Divine. He will not sit down in the house which I have polluted. "His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all his goings." "O God, Thou knowest my failings; and my sins are not hid from Thee." Terrible is the thought that sometimes God seems to gather up our sins and to look upon them in the fiercest light: "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." We cannot hide our counsel from the Lord, or do our works in the dark, and say, Who seeth us, and who knoweth us? How is this sin to be overcome? how is this inspiration to be broken down? Here again I am brought face to face with the power of the Cross, with the very majesty and sovereignty of Christ. He hath led captivity captive; He hath wounded my enemy even unto the death, and because of His triumph I may enter into the joy of victory. Lord Jesus, repeat Thy victories in my own experience. When the enemy would come in as a flood lift up Thy Spirit as a standard against him. "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." If I say I have no sin I deceive myself: the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it, and all my life shall accuse me as a fierce witness. God be merciful unto me. In the pitifulness of Thy great mercy help me and save me, Thou Redeemer of men. Send upon me Thy Holy Spirit that I may be made holy in the inward parts, that there may be nothing hidden in the depths of my soul which is contrary to Thine own purity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew within me a right spirit. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

*"Holy, holy, holy Lord,
In the highest heavens adored,
Author of all nature's frame,
Father! hallowed be Thy Name.*

*"Though estranged from Thee in heart,
Doubtless Thou our Father art:
From Thy hand our spirits came:
Father! hallowed be Thy Name.*

*Nor by nature's tie alone
Thou art as our Father known;
Nearer now, in Christ our claim;
Father! hallowed be Thy Name.*

*"Born anew, O may we feel
Filial love, the Spirit's seal;
Cleansed from guilt, redeemed from shame:
Father! hallowed be Thy Name.*

*"Whether, then, in want or wealth,
Joy or sorrow, pain or health,
Still our prayer shall be the same:
Father! hallowed be Thy Name."*

HOLY, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. Thou hast been the dwelling place of Thy children in all generations, therefore, my dying life hides itself day by day in Thy great strength. The morning is a witness to Thy glory, and all the day Thy goodness goeth before me as a guiding cloud. If for a moment I have said, Lord, where are Thy former lovingkindnesses? Thou hast returned to my soul, and gathered me with everlasting mercies. Lord, I bless Thee for all lifting up of soul, for hours of special joy, for seasons of loving vision: then did my heart leap within me, and I exclaimed, Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be compared unto the Lord? O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto Thee? or to Thy faithfulness round about Thee? For such seasons of rapture I bless Thee, for in their glory I saw the light beyond.

By all gentle words and beautiful terms hast Thou set forth Thy great love, and Thy daily patience with me. Thou dost not hurl against me Thy great power, but Thou art full of mercy and pitifulness. Power belongeth unto God—unto Thee also, O Lord, belongeth mercy: it is my joy to know that omnipotence is in the hands of love. A bruised reed Thou wilt not break, smoking flax Thou wilt not quench. Thou knowest my frame, Thou rememberest that I am but dust, and Jesus answers all the extremity of my weakness and of my want. His blood cleanseth from all sin—the root of

His cross is deep as my degradation. Oh that I may believe this, and hasten unto Christ and put my soul's care and want and guilt and shame into His keeping, that I may be washed and cleansed and have the past taken away as by a mighty flood. *Amen.*

REMEMBERED BLESSINGS.

I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice ; and He gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord : my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God and was troubled : I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. Thou holdest mine eyes waking ; and I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night : I commune with mine own heart : and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever ? and will He be favourable no more ? Is His mercy clean gone for ever ? doth His promise fail for evermore ? Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies ? Selah. And I said, This is my infirmity : but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high. I will remember the works of the Lord : surely I will remember Thy wonders of old.—PSALM lxxvii. 1-11.

WHILST my companions and friends have gone to meet the Lord in His own dwelling-place, I would turn my thoughts upon the blessings which have sustained and comforted me in days that are gone. I find new help in the old blessings. We do not want any new blessings, we simply want to repeat the holiest experiences we have already enjoyed. The Gospel is not the less new that it is old. We have the old sun but a new light ; so we have the old Saviour but the new comfort and the new hope. I can say of the Lord, Thou art my light and my salvation : whom shall I fear ? Thou art the strength of my life : of whom shall I be afraid ? What a blessing to be enabled to apply such promises personally and directly to one's own soul. There is a grandeur about general history which we could not well do

without in taking our larger views of Divine providence ; yet there is a peculiar pathos in individual experience which the heart can never cease to feel and to answer. In the Bible we have much personal experience related. Are we not ourselves too much afraid of what is called egotism? Does not this fear prevent our testimony being as full and as emphatic as it ought to be? The saints in the olden time were wont to say, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust ; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." I cannot but observe how often the word "my" occurs in the testimony. This is the personal declaration of indebtedness to God, and I feel that just as I can make God's providence a personal reality do I lay hold of it with real and sustaining comfort. The Psalmist said, "Come, all ye that fear God, and I will declare unto you what He hath done for my soul." He did not propose to say what other souls had enjoyed of God's mercy, but what His own soul had specially received of the Divine goodness. What has the Lord done for me? Has He not given me new desires? Has He not made me dissatisfied with earth and time when they claim to be sufficient to meet the wants of the soul? Has He not set death itself in a new aspect? Has He not surrounded the very grave with the flowers of heaven? Has He not sent down singing birds through all the cloud and darkness of this earthly state to utter the music of heaven and excite the praises of the heart? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in my eyes. I find that when I put the case of spiritual communion in a personal form, it is no longer a question of mere words or of high argument. Experience is the best reasoning ; what I have really felt of the Divine goodness has been proved, not by some formal process, but by the joy of my own heart.

Lord, help me this day to see more of Thee than I have ever seen before. I know the condition upon which Thou wilt come to me. The Lord resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble. May I have real humility of heart. Take out of me the spirit of self-trust, and help me to look away from myself and my sins to my Saviour and His sacrifice ; and though I may not be able to understand these, yet I may feel all their gracious power in my thankful heart. Help me to bear the burden which I have to carry. Give me the tender patience which never complains ; the sweet and complete resignation that knows that all things are ordered in wisdom and in love, and that the explanation of mystery will come by-and-by, and shine as a great light all over the way and trouble of life. Give joy to those who are worshipping Thee this day in Thy house. May they be glad in the Lord, and rejoice and shout for joy because of the uprightness of their hearts. Thou hast often put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto my God ; may many see it, and fear, and trust in the Lord. Keep me humble, obedient, thankful, then I shall be ready to do all Thy will and to receive Thy blessings with true profitableness, not turning aside from the visions of Thy love, but welcoming them, and dwelling upon them with grateful rapture. Lord, make this house an abode of peace. Protect it in the time of storm ; may flowers of joy grow within it even in the winter time ; and when sickness and death come within these walls, may they come as friends and not as enemies. Lord, hear this prayer of mine as it is breathed at the Saviour's blessed Cross. When I think of the Saviour my heart overflows with love. He is all my salvation and all my delight. He is the fulness of the Godhead. In Him I have all things, yea, more than I could dream or imagine, for I can truly say that the riches of Christ are unsearchable. Remember not my offences,

neither reward me according to my iniquities, but come to me by the way of the Cross, then Thou wilt not be angry with me. Into Thy hands I commit my spirit.

*" In time of tribulation,
Hear, Lord, my feeble cries :
With humble supplication,
To Thee my spirit flies.
My heart with grief is breaking ;
Scarce can my voice complain ;
Mine eyes, with tears kept waking,
Still watch and weep in vain.*

*" The days of old, in vision,
Bring vanished bliss to view :
The years of lost fruition
Their joys in pangs renew :
Remembered songs of gladness,
Through night's lone silence brought,
Strike notes of deeper sadness,
And stir desponding thought.*

*" Hath God cast off for ever ?
Can time His truth impair ?
His tender mercy, never
Shall I presume to share ?
Hath He His lovingkindness
Shut up in endless wrath ?
No ! this is mine own blindness
That cannot see His path.*

*" I call to recollection
The years of His right hand ;
And strong in His protection,
Again through faith I stand.
Thy deeds, O Lord, are wonder ;
Holy are all Thy ways :
The secret place of thunder
Shall utter forth Thy praise."*

O LORD GOD, there is no God like unto Thee in heaven and in earth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin ; Thy mercy endureth for ever. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy word. When my transgressions are multiplied before Thee, and my sins testify against me, then show me the power of Thy Cross, O Thou Eternal Son of the Eternal God. According to my peculiar temperament and my special need, do Thou be graciously pleased to visit me, that I may lack no good thing. When my spirit within me is overwhelmed, and my heart is desolate, then let there arise a great light upon my soul, a light above the brightness of the sun, and I shall know that the glory of the Lord hath risen upon me. Sometimes I walk in darkness, and have no light, and Thy judgments are round about me as a great deep, and I know not what Thy purpose is concerning my shrinking life. When the night is very dark, and the road is very lonely, and my own spirit is sinking within me, then, good Lord, Father of my Saviour, have pity upon me, forsake me not.

Now that I am alone with Thee I would speak to Thee out of the fulness of my heart on behalf of others. We may pray for one another, according to Thy word, and thus be of service in a spiritual though often in an unknown way. I pray Thee on behalf of all my family and kindred and friends. If any of them know Thee not, may this be the day of Thy revelation to their souls. If any of them are seeking God, yet dare not tell that they are in quest of His presence, may the spirit of fear be extinguished within them, and the spirit of hope take its place. If any of my friends are purposing evil in their hearts, Lord, send upon them the spirit of wisdom and pureness, that they may safely turn aside from every way that is forbidden. Reward them that diligently seek Thee, and help all to draw near Thee with a true heart in fulness of faith. I would pray also for those who are known as prodigals. They have gone away from father's house and home and protecting hand; they have gone far into the regions of darkness and poverty and sorrow: Lord, bring them all back by the power of the Cross of Christ. If any of my friends have difficulty in business, in earning honest bread, in buying, selling, and doing the work of the world, Lord, encourage them by holy thoughts, by tender inspirations from heaven, and by the quickening of their memories as to all Thy promises and judgments. Bless the poor and the needy; the fatherless and the widow; and may all that are oppressed cast their care upon Thee. Lord, some whom Thou lovest are sick: send Thy word and heal them; and as for those who draw near to the gates of death, meet them at the portals of eternity, and give them welcome to heavenly mansions.

I thank Thee for all Thy goodness to myself, for all the bounties of nature, for all the delight that I see around about

me in young life, and for everything that gives hope that the Lord will yet come to claim the whole earth as His own. Thou visitest the earth and waterest it: seedtime and harvest Thou dost duly send. The heavens declare Thy glory, and the earth is full of Thy riches. Why art Thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God. Deliver me from all evil: from the love of the world and the things that are in the world; from the lust of the flesh, from the lust of the eyes, and from the pride of life; from entering into the path of the wicked, and from turning away from wisdom and instruction. O Lord, save me from a proud look and a lying tongue, and from a heart that deviseth wicked imagination. Help me to be faithful unto the end. He that endureth unto the end shall be saved. May I not at last be a castaway, having made shipwreck of faith, but by daily trust in Thyself, through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, may I be safely kept until this brief time of trial is over. Work in me the image of the heavenly, the mind which is in Christ Jesus, and give me fulness of joy as will help my faith in God. I feel my heart warming within me as I think of all Thy goodness. May the enemy steal none of my riches, lest in the time of poverty I rebel against God.

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

TRUST IN GOD.

Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For lo, they that are far from Thee shall perish: Thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from Thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all Thy works.—PSALM lxxiii. 24-28.

O GOD, who art not a man that Thou shouldst lie, neither the Son of man that Thou shouldst repent. Hast Thou said, and shalt Thou not do it? Thy faithfulness reacheth even unto the heavens. What Thou hast spoken that Thou shalt make good. Thou art able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. Thou wilt be ever mindful of Thy covenant. Thou art a shield unto them that put their trust in Thee. Thine eyes are upon the righteous; the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon; he shall flourish in the courts of our God.

Thou, O Lord, hast set all the borders of the earth: Thou hast made summer and winter. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm; Thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land. Yet after winter shall come the fair spring, as after darkness comes the tender dawn. “My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away: for, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.” All the seasons are Thine: Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness.

Father in heaven, Saviour of the world, Spirit of all truth, Three in One, One in Three, my heart goes forth to Thee in sacred rapture, because of Thine unfailing love. What

shall I render unto the Lord for all His goodness? I have seen Thy great power, and have been sore afraid: I have seen Thy love, and my soul has been filled with joy. Truly, the heart of them shall rejoice that seek the Lord. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!

For Thy dear Son's sake, O Lord of heaven and earth, multiply Thy goodness towards me. Thou givest strength and wisdom, Thou settest up and Thou bringest down, Thou dost fix a boundary round about me. I give myself wholly to Thy guidance. If a rough way be better for me than a smooth path, Thy will be done. If I am to find my strength in weakness and my joy in sorrow, Thy will be done. If I am to live to an old age, or to be cut down in the midst of my years, Thy will be done. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

*" Father of eternal grace,
Glorify Thyself in me;
Meekly beaming in my face,
May the world Thine image see.*

*" Happy only in Thy love,
Poor, unfriended, or unknown;
Fix my thoughts on things above;
Stay my heart on Thee alone.*

*" Humble, holy, all resigned
To Thy will,—Thy will be done!
Give me, Lord, the perfect mind
Of Thy well-beloved Son.*

*" Counting gain and glory loss,
May I tread the path He trod;
Die with Jesus on the cross,
Rise with Him to Thee, my God."*

Amen.

SUNDAY READINGS.

ON GOD'S POWER THE COMFORT OF HIS PEOPLE.

"Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? there is no searching of His understanding."—ISAIAH xl. 28.

THESE words are addressed to the despondent, and at the first sound of them it would appear as if those who were cast down were spoken to in a voice of thunder. It would appear also as if a softer tone were better adapted to the conditions of the persons referred to in the context : viz., those who were mourning God's absence, and sighing over the unwelcome lot which has come upon them. But this great interrogation seems as if the very thunder had taken in charge God's defence and man's elevation. Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary ? Sometimes the voice of consolation seems to come to us out of the depths of God's heart ; sometimes it is as if comfort were spoken to us in a whisper.

"Hast thou not known ?" This is not a new revelation. It is an appeal to memory, and that is a strong point in all the Divine pleading. We do not read here for the first time that God fainteth not, neither is weary. It is a mark of interrogation that is beautifully made a challenge of recollection. Our memory is to be as the prophet of the Lord in our life. Recollection is to be inspiration ; the forty years gone are a pledge of the forty years to come. Let a man be faithful to his own recollections, and it is impossible he can long be despondent, weary, and slow of heart to lay hold of the great work and discipline of life. There is no heart that

has not its own peculiar memories of the Divine strength and of Divine interposition, and of Divine help in the hour of extremity, when sorrow was agony and when agony was despair.

Is God all-mighty? (1) Then do not fear for the stability of His works. We have no occasion to be afraid lest the sun should miss his way. "Seedtime and harvest, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." We look for the continuance of these things, the keeping up of God's great temple because God's word has been given, because God's sufficiency underlies, and encompasses, and gives stability to all His works. (2) Then have no fear about the realisation of His promises. Oftentimes it is difficult to see how certain promises are to be realised. We have nothing to do with that whatever. God keeps our hands off His promises quite as surely as He keeps them off His stars. He will not ask us to have anything to do with the outworking and realisation of His promises. He asks that their fulfilment be left to Him, and afterwards He will challenge our own life as the witness, and answer, and confirmation of all that is gracious and all that is sure in the outworking of His words of promise.

God is not only powerful; He is also all-wise. There is no searching of His understanding. The darkest providences have meaning. The darkest hours in our life have some intent, and it is really not needful that we should know all at once what that intent is. Let us keep within our own little sphere, live a day at a time, breathe a breath at a time, and be content with one pulsation at a time, and interpretation will come when God pleases, and as He pleases.

Is God all-wise? Then our individual life is all understood by Him. That life is but dimly known to ourselves. We catch glimpses of it here and there, but its scope and meaning are still unrevealed to us. We are often in shadow. There

are scattered rays of light, but no steady shining of the sun which protects us from the mystery of much darkness. It is enough that God knows our life, and that His wisdom is pledged as our defence. To-morrow is coming upon us, and we know not with what messages and revelations, with what joys and troubles ; but God is coming with it, and in His path is the brightness of all-sufficient wisdom.

Is God all-wise ? Then we have a guarantee of endless variety in our future studies and services. God is ever extending our knowledge of His works, in reward of the endeavours we are making to acquaint ourselves with the wonders by which we are enclosed. God will ever have something new to communicate to the mind of His servants : secret after secret will be given up to their possession ; realm after realm will be thrown open to their investigation ; and when unnumbered ages have expired, the infinite riches of Divine wisdom will be undiminished.

What is our relation to this Dread Being, whose power is infinite, and whose wisdom is past finding out ? We must sustain some relation to Him. We are the loyal subjects of His crown, or rebels in His empire. Everything depends upon our relation to the Cross of Jesus Christ. Have we repented of sin—have we poured out our hearts in rivers of contrition—have we yielded our hearts in reply to the all-entreating and overwhelming argument of the Cross ? You reverence God—that is not enough ; you are lost in admiration of His marvellous power as shown in the courses of nature—that is not enough ; you see proofs of His existence and government in every leaf in the forest—that is not enough ; these things have no relation to sin, they do not recover our lost sonship, they leave untouched the blackest and saddest facts of our life ! Nature itself, brilliant and tuneful, is but a mocking mystery apart from the Cross—it is a lustrous

grave, a prison under the name of a palace, a land of captivity and sorrow. Souls are not saved by studying the works of nature. Nature has no redeeming message for hearts burdened with a sense of guilt; we must go further and go deeper, a cry must be sent up to the dwelling-place of the Most High. O God, save us! O God, be merciful unto us! O God, redeem us from the slavery and torment of sin! And whilst we are yet speaking, a voice addresses the anxious heart—"Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

ON DIFFERENT WAYS OF DWELLING.

"Dwell deep . . . Dwell without care . . . Dwell alone."—JEREMIAH xlix. 30, 31.

NO life can be truly deep that is not truly religious. Flippancy can never secure the best purposes of life. Religion binds us to the infinite; it challenges our strongest powers; it lures even weakness itself towards might and courage; it speaks the word of hope and inspiration when we imagine that our whole task is exhausted. What is our religion? Is it something assumed or something real? Is it one with the soul or is it a mere adjunct? Does it bear us above all fear, or does it but vary our torment? By our answers to such questions as these, we shall best know whether we "dwell deeply" or merely cling to the treacherous surface. The young must not suppose that in being definite in their faith they cannot also be progressive. Elders, too, must be reminded that digging deeply is quite compatible with building beautifully and loftily. What is meant by the exhortation to dig deeply? It is that we may find the Stone, "disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious." The foundation is laid. "The stone

which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner." To dwell in Christ, is to dwell deeply. To be hidden in the very life of Christ, is to dwell deeply. To be vitally interested in the never-ceasing intercession of Christ, is to dwell deeply. To be the temples of the Holy Ghost, is to dwell deeply. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love; may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

"*Dwell without care.*"—The Apostle Paul says, "Be careful for nothing:" Peter says, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." It is in this sense that we are to live without care. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." If we care for God, He will care for us. Our care begins and ends with God. We must be right with Him. The soul being right, the outward condition becomes of no moment. To be right with God is to sit upon His throne, and to view the affairs of life as God views them; to regard them in their entirety, and to be superior to their influence.

The uncarefulness to which the Christian is called is an expression of profound trust in his Heavenly Father. Let this be repeated again and again, that Christian serenity may be protected from the charge of stoicism; and that Christian faith may not be confounded with coarse and defiant presumption. We are distinctly called to uncarefulness,

and our call is addressed to us in the most tuneful and persuasive manner. The duty is founded upon a promise—a voluminous and all-inclusive promise; we are summoned by the voice of music, we are inspired by the glad spirit of hope. Hear the proof of these assurances: “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” We are called upon to give living illustration of these principles, and are to remind ourselves that such illustration is often very subtle in its expression and influence. An impatient tone may betray us. An anxious look may dishonour the Master. One fretful action may becloud the lustre of our faith. What manner of persons, then, ought we to be, in all steadfastness, tranquillity, and cheerfulness? What is the meaning of the wrinkled brow—the apprehensive eye—the hesitating tone;—are not these the signs of unbelief, the signature and token of an evil supremacy? All our uneasiness is a reflection upon God’s goodness. Every assertion of our own strength is distrust of Omnipotence. O ye who are watched by the eye that needs no sleep, and that makes day for itself even where the darkness is deepest—ye guarded ones around whom stand the ministers of God as the mountains stand round about Jerusalem—ye who are named in the covenant which God

made with His Son, and for whom the Son is waiting in the heavens, consider your high calling, and by the confidence which you have in God show the world that they who care for God escape the corrosion of profane anxiety !

“ *Dwell alone.* ”—By this exhortation is not intended a call to hermitic seclusion, to misanthropy, to churlish loneliness, or the like. Such an exhortation would offend all our social instincts, and upset everything that endears man to man. Sociality may become dissipation. Even sworn friends may see too much of one another. Neighbours may be too often on their neighbours' threshold. Solitude is needful to the highest culture of life. Have resources in yourselves ; specially, walk with God. In recommending solitude, it must not be supposed that I am recommending melancholy or morbid brooding. Loneliness may quite as easily become a mischief as a blessing. When we seek to be alone, it should be that our view of the Father may be more distinct and impressive. Jesus Christ sought retirement that He might renew His strength : on the solitary hill He was preparing for the busy city ; His midnight prayer was preparatory to His mid-day beneficence ; when He was alone, He was least alone. We must never seek for the loneliness which shuns the Divine presence, for if we find it we find the devil clothed in redoubled power. Godless solitude is often the forerunner of suicide. I would exhort you to avail yourselves of the retirement which will bring you, as it were, face to face with God. We need repose. We cannot always live in the tempest. We must now and then talk to our own hearts, and make the acquaintance of our own souls. “ Dwell deeply : Dwell without care : Dwell alone. ” Dwell deeply, by living, moving, and having your being in God : dwell without care, by casting your burden in childlike trust upon the Lord : dwell alone, by

being independent of the deceitful excitements which dazzle only that they may destroy. Dwell deeply, and the years shall never waste your power ; dwell without care, and your strength will be ready for the highest uses ; dwell alone, and your fellowship will be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

ON POSTHUMOUS INFLUENCE.

“ Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.”—2 PETER i. 15.

ALL old men like to talk about themselves. They are their own library. Their recollections, like the sea-shells, have in them the boom of the ocean, and in that boom they hear messages from the venerable past. Peter says, “ I will endeavour.” His eye brightens, and in his voice there is a quiver of emotion ; he sees the heavenly port ; he feels that he is breaking up fellowship with this tabernacle ; he descries the glory-crowned Beulah ; he hears the play of the wave as it breaks on the sinless shore ; and then speaks with rapture of an “ abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” He who would be useful to posterity must be useful to his contemporaries. Sublime life and sublime influence are cause and effect. If we are careful about the life, the influence need not excite our anxiety. “ No man liveth unto himself.” A man’s audience may be small to-day, but if he has a living word to utter, his congregation will increase with the ages. Milton never sang to so large an assembly as he sings to to-day. Bunyan is, so to speak, more alive to-day than when he dreamed the world’s happiest dream ; he had life then, but he has life “ more abundantly ” now. The true

man does not work for one generation alone. Every true thought is a globe of light, which shall never cease to shine in the world's brightening firmament. What is true in the loftier realms of thought is also true in the humbler spheres of service. The law of the oak is the law of the daisy. All character leaves more or less of influence behind it. Is that child of yours dead, that years ago, with a bursting heart, you laid under the sod? As long as you carry her fair face in your eye's picture book—as long as her charming prattle is memoried in your faithful ear—so long the child is not dead, but sleepeth. Is your companion dead with whom you were wont to take sweet counsel? You hid no secrets from each other. In the new-born light and in the deepening shade you walked together, talked together, exchanged speculations, and compared experiences. The one was the complement of the other. And now that you know him no longer after the flesh, is he therefore dead? Verily, no. So thoroughly were you one in all your higher instincts and aspirations, that even now you feel as though you could consult him. Even now, with mystic mien and hallowing voice, he takes part in the counsels of your life. While Bunyan lived he was but as a mustard-seed; now he is as a great cathedral tree, in which ten thousand voices are lifted up in laudatory and grateful song! "Thou fool, that which Thou sowest is not quickened except it die." No living man is complete. While your heart beats you are undergoing a process. Time will mellow you; age will tone your character. Do not urge society to give you a verdict just now. To-day is not the measure of our brief eternity; there is a to-morrow coming—coming from the heart of God—coming from the clime of light—coming with justice in its hand and mercy on its lip; and to that better day we must commit our cause. The good can afford to be patient. The

true can wait until the battering shower is over. The storm can extinguish man's rushlights, but the orbs of God burn on far beyond the storm's dark wing.

Mark the fact that influence survives our personal presence in society. Opinions have come down to us from the earliest ages, and are to-day ranked among the most influential of national or social forces. Take the one case of the family. The old man quotes what his venerated mother said when he was quite a child, and the mother's word is to him more powerful than all the statutes of learned parliaments. You have seen a man's face break into smiles when he called up words which moulded and directed his infancy. The voice that uttered them is employed in other spheres, far off in the higher light that we have come to know by the sweet name of heaven ; but the thoughts which they embody are comforting angels, that will tarry with us till the dark horizon blushes with the purple of a better day.

The point to be remembered is this:—our personal absence does not terminate our influence upon earth. We are setting in motion a train of influences that shall outrun the wheels of the world, and be but commencing when those wheels take fire and cease their revolutions for ever. Tremendous is the responsibility of those who have to operate upon unformed and unsettled mind. The writing which parents write can never be obliterated. Even circumstances to which we attach little or no importance haunt the memory. The frown, the smile, the gentle word, the harsh rebuff, are not to be forgotten ! A terrible thing it is to live ! Dying is nothing ! Beasts die. Living is everything ! On every side the invisible is pressing upon us. The lifting of a hand sends a shudder to the stars ! The falling of a tear is heard in the depths of the Infinite ! We little know how sensitive is the universe. Wherever we put the tip of a finger we

touch the hem of the King's garment. The stones need but a word from heaven to cause them to stand up as children of Abraham. What, then, shall be said of the moral universe? Experiences, ideas, emotions run on from age to age, and thus to-day bears the uncounted riches of all expired time. To live once is to live for ever. The feeblest pulse in the obscurest circle flutters and thrills on in its influences when faded worlds expire; and shattered empires go down in death. Let us serve the living, and through them the coming ages. We may all do this. Some can throw open kingdoms of thought, others can carry the prophet's mantle; others can lift up the wounded and weary. Blessed is that servant who is found waiting! We do not work alone. Down through the pitiless tempest comes this word of strength, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Into the dark cave into which despair has sometimes driven us comes the same word of power. If we falter for one moment, it is that we may spring forward with increased energy the next. We are not to see the results of all that we do. It is enough that no true word can return void to the speaker. Utter the Lord's cry to the sons of men; put in the roots; scatter the seed; and one day the eternal summer shall set in, and all memories shall be absorbed in the one recollection, that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man.

ON RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST.

"Have ye received the Holy Ghost?"—Acts xix, 2.

WHAT is the one decisive sign by which we may know whether we have received the Holy Ghost? Let us approach that question through another. Have we received the poetic spirit? How do we prove it? Not by prose, but

by poetry. Have we received the Holy Spirit? The decisive sign is love of holiness—a heart that pants after the holiness of God—life concentrated into one burning prayer to be sanctified, body, soul, and spirit—life a sacrifice on God's altar.

There must in holiness be love of truth—love of truth as truth—truth in doctrine, truth in spirit, truth in life, truth in conversation. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth, and where there is love of truth there will, as consequent elements of holiness, be love of righteousness—pure, simple, absolute, infinite righteousness. Things will be done in life, not because they are convenient, but because they are right. All our life will be holiness unto the Lord. Worship will not be with us a strange exercise: it shall be to our mouth as sweetness, to our heart as love, to the hunger of our being and its thirst as bread and water. Our whole body, soul, and spirit will be an offering of praise, and an expression of trust towards God. Come, O Breath of the four winds, and breathe upon us, that we may be getting on over the troubled waters, and hastening to our desired haven! O Spirit of the living God, baptize us with fire, give us the warmth without which there is no life! Have we received the Holy Ghost? If not, ours is but an empty profession, and our loudest declarations are echoes, not voices, and they will come back upon us without bringing any blessing.

ALMIGHTY GOD, Thou givest the Holy Spirit unto them that ask Thee: I ask Thee now for that most blessed gift. Blessed Spirit, dwell with me, and my heart shall be full of joy. Gracious Teacher, abide with me, and I shall be led into all truth; Gracious Comforter, make Thine abode in my

heart; show me all the meaning of my tears. Wash me in the precious blood of Jesus Christ Thy Son, and there shall be no stain upon me.

*"Eternal Light! eternal Light!
How pure the soul must be,
When placed within Thy searching sight
It shrinks not, but with calm delight
Can live and look on Thee!"*

*"The spirits that surround Thy throne,
May bear the burning bliss;
But that is surely theirs alone,
Since they have never, never known
A fallen world like this."*

*"O! how shall I, whose native sphere
Is dark, whose mind is dim,
Before the Ineffable appear,
And on my naked spirit bear
That uncreated beam?"*

*"There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode:—
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God:—"*

*"These, these prepare us for the sight
Of Holiness above:
The sons of ignorance and night
May dwell in the Eternal Light
Through the Eternal Love!"*

Amen.

THE CONVICTION OF SIN.

NOT until a man comes without price in his hand, without self-hope in his heart, without self-praise in his mind and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner," can he ever know how worthless is his own morality, how vain his noblest deeds.

*"In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling."*

The man confesses himself a sinner—not much of a sinner, not a sinner in certain degrees, not a sinner hardly so sinful as other people—but a sinner! Vast in its concentration is that confession. Overwhelming is that utterance in its very simplicity. When men feel themselves to be what the Spirit of God describes them as being, they want no quantifying term to define their position. "A sinner" says more in its simplicity and concentration than could be said by the minutest elaboration of the speech.

Where the true idea of sin is realised under the ministry of God the Holy Ghost, the necessity of the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ will be understood, realised, and will form the one foundation of human hope. For years the idea has been floating before my mind, and I have found no words to speak it to others ; but it is the stay of my life, it is the strength of my ministry, it is the secret of any earnestness I may feel in preaching the everlasting Gospel, namely this : The Atonement I do not receive merely as a theologian. I cannot understand that Cross—great, rugged, melancholy Cross—if I look at it only from the eminence occupied by the scholar, or the theologian. But when I feel myself in my heart of hearts a sinner, a trespasser of God's law and God's love ; when I feel that a thought may send me to everlasting destruction, that a secret unexpressed desire may shut me out of heaven—then some man tells me that Jesus Christ was wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities, that the chastisement of my peace was laid upon Him ; and I, pressing my way through all grammarians and theologians, say, " If I perish I will pray, and perish only at the foot of the Cross ; for if this be not sufficient, it hath not entered into the heart of man to solve the problem of human depravity and human consciousness of sin."

The sinner does not ask for explanation—minute, critical, and techinal—when he comes into that state of heart before the dear bleeding Christ. He leaves all questions of criticism, and formal theology, to be settled by-and-by. In the meantime he feels this : That if the blood of the Son of God cannot reach those secret sins, those unexpressed desires, then no river that flows through the earth can wash him clean, no detergent discovered by industrious morality can ever take out of him the deep stain and taint ! Sometimes we look at the work of the Lamb of God without feeling that we are

sinners. Then we have a thousand difficult questions to put about it. At other times the burden of our sin is so heavy upon us, we see the sinfulness of sin so clearly, we get away so entirely from all mere accident of time, place, and shape, so far as they relate to sin,—we see sin as God saw it and as God ever must see it, then we say: O Lamb of God, Thou didst not shed one drop too much of Thy precious blood, Thou didst not endure one needless pang! We see sin now in some measure as Thou didst see it. We understand what Thou meanest when Thou sayest, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. We know what is meant by the glorious gospel that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners!

*"With broken heart and contrite sigh,
A trembling sinner, Lord, I cry;
Thy pardoning grace is rich and free,
O God, be merciful to me.*

*"I smite upon my troubled breast,
With deep and conscious guilt oppressed;
Christ and His cross my only plea,
O God, be merciful to me.*

*"Far off I stand with tearful eyes,
Nor dare uplift them to the skies;
But Thou dost all my anguish see,
O God, be merciful to me.*

*"Nor alms, nor deeds that I have done,
Can for a single sin atone;
To Calvary alone I flee,
O God, be merciful to me.*

*"And when redeemed from sin and hell,
With all the ransomed throng I dwell,
My raptured song shall ever be,
God has been merciful to me."*

THE PREPARED PLACE.

THE Christian believer is the object of Jesus Christ's zealous and tender care. When Jesus Christ was going away, He said to His wondering disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go." And the Apostle Paul, catching his Master's sublime tone, said, "All things are yours." And Peter cried out, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of our Lord

Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Yet we hang our heads, and moan and cry as if we had nothing, not knowing that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Wherever we find Jesus Christ, we find Him working for His people, doing something for those who believe in Him and love Him. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." There is a beautiful necessity of love about this arrangement. For if He were to fail here,—fail in training, educating, sanctifying the Church,—He would fail altogether. What if He has made countless millions of stars? Can the stars talk to Him? Can He get back the idea which He gave? Can He have sympathy with form, substance, glory, majesty, as found in mere matter? If He does not get us—poor, broken things—right into His blue, glad heaven, He has failed! That is the one work which He set Himself to do. If He drops one poor little child out of His great arms because He has not capacity and strength enough, He could never be happy in His heaven. Think of this: Christ always thinking for us, caring for us, going out in all the passion of His love after us, and then say whether the Church ought always to have tears in her eyes, and never to have peace in her heart?

Not only are Christian believers constant objects of Jesus Christ's most zealous and tender care, but they are to be eternally His joy. "I go to prepare a place for you." The plain meaning of that is fellowship, residence together in common. He said afterwards, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Giving us the idea of permanence, continuity of residence, and fellowship. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we

ask or think." "He fainteth not, neither is weary." As for these heavens, He will one day dismiss them. He will create a new heaven and a new earth. He will burn up and utterly destroy what He has made. He makes some things for the time being; but wherever we read of the place prepared for Christian believers, we have the idea of continuous, enduring time—never-ending fellowship. All true life is in the heart. Love alone is immortal. "God is love." Love must endure as God endureth. This is it which binds Christ and Christians—love. Love is knowledge. Love hath the key of interpretation. Love can see the invisible. Do we love Christ, or are we still in the region of mere controversy and cold intellectual inquiry? If we love Him we shall be with Him for ever.

Seeing that Christ makes the Christian believer the object of His constant and zealous care, and that the Christian believer shall be for ever with his Lord, the Christian is entitled to look at the present through the medium of the future. The more we can bring the power of this love to bear upon the passing moments, we can look into the things which are seen, and at the things which are not seen; and step out of eternity morning by morning, do our little day's work, and go back again into God's pavilion. If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable. But we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Jesus Christ teaches this most beautiful doctrine:—That the Christian heart is not to be troubled, because in His Father's house are many mansions. So He brings down heaven to help up earth. He says, "When you are weary of the present, look forward to the future; when the road is steep, and difficult, and tortuous, think of the end, and be thankful and glad."

GOD'S POWER OF CONCEALMENT.

"But the disciples knew not that it was Jesus."—JOHN xxi. 4.

HAVE you thought much about this power of concealment on the part of God? Dwell upon that notion occasionally, and it will cheer you very much,—this power of disguise, this power of not being God, as it were, to a man. We speak of blessings in disguise. What if God be always in disguise? What if the brightest revelation of God which is possible to us down here turn out in the long run to have been but a disguise, as it were, a faint attempt to do the impossible? "But the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." When they walked to Emmaus and the stranger drew near and talked to them as they had never been talked to before, "they knew not that it was Jesus." "Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him." And is it not sometimes good for us that we should not know God in some of His dispensations, that for a small moment (can you measure that?) He should forsake us? That momentary abandonment brings in His everlasting kindness with such richness, and glory, and sweetness. Let us think of this for our own uplifting of soul, and comfort, and confidence,—that Jesus Christ is always near though we do not always see him. Let it be the comfort and strength of our hearts that though we may not always see Him, His eye is never for a moment taken from us. We see Him not, and yet we do see Him with the vision of the soul. We cannot point Him out as John pointed Him out, yet we are conscious that He is close at hand, watching our service and making our morning.

*"Not with our mortal eyes
Have we beheld the Lord;
Yet we rejoice to hear His Name,
And love Him in His word.*

*"On earth we want the sight
Of our Redeemer's face:
Yet, Lord, our inmost thoughts delight
To dwell upon Thy grace."*

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